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The hidden risks in Rentokil
Champagne & poker faces in W8
The harassment of Polish writers
Inside Mrs Gandhi's police state

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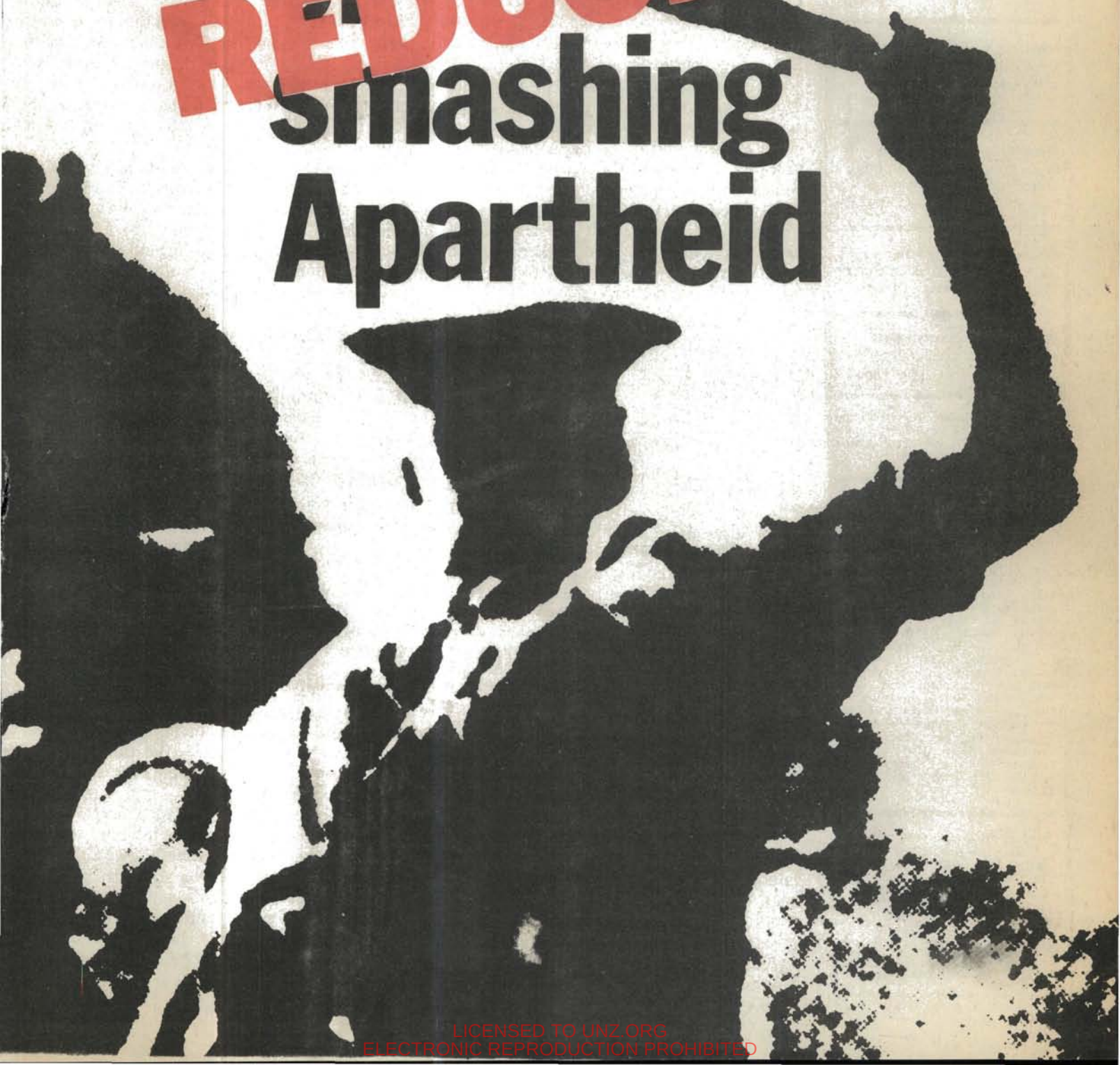
The cost of REDUCED! smashing Apartheid



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South Africa: making sanctions bite

THE DEBATE over South African sanctions has been polarised between two viewpoints. Anti-apartheid groups have always called for total economic warfare against the white regime. Opponents of sanctions (mostly the people who benefit from existing links with South Africa) argue that the costs to the West would simply be too high, and that in any case a boycott wouldn't be effective.

This week we report fresh evidence on the cost of sanctions on British jobs. On the basis of this evidence the cost could be considerably less than the pro-apartheid lobby has maintained. The significance of this point will, we hope, not be lost on those trade union leaders who have been too timid until now to apply their muscle to committing Labour to a sanctions policy.

Even so, if sanctions are to be made to work, then three questions must be faced. First, could sanctions actually be policed — or would they be evaded as they were over Rhodesia? Secondly, would an economic boycott lead to radical political change within South Africa? And finally, could Western governments be expected to accept the economic costs of imposing sanctions at a time of deepening recession?

An examination of South Africa's dependence on the outside world suggests that there are certain areas where the apartheid regime is particularly vulnerable. The first is its reliance on imports of strategic goods — such as civilian aircraft, computers and other electronic machinery, chemicals, power-generating plant, land rover-type vehicles, etc.

SOUTH AFRICA's most vulnerable point, however, is oil. It has no oil deposits of its own, and, according to detailed studies done for the UN, would be unable to survive for more than about two-and-a-half years without oil imports — even taking into account the country's large stockpile, and the contribution of the new Sasol oil-from-coal plants that will come onstream in the next few years.

An oil embargo would also be one of the simplest forms of sanctions to police. South Africa's long coastline would clearly help it smuggle in many goods: but not oil. The country requires about 300,000 barrels a day, or one super-tanker load every five days. It is quite impossible to disguise a super-tanker (which is almost a quarter of a mile in length); and the only unloading facilities are at Cape Town and Durban.

Action could then be taken to 'black' any tanker that had delivered oil to South Africa. The UN could make a guilty tanker liable to confiscation at the next port it reached, a step which would effectively mean that a blacked tanker was virtually worthless to its owner.

Yet an oil embargo would involve little cost to the international community. South Africa's oil imports represent less than 1 per cent of the oil sold on the world market, and no single oil-exporting country depends to any significant extent on sales to South Africa.

An oil embargo would, however, hit some of South Africa's neighbours which currently import their requirements from South Africa. Zimbabwe, which still buys its oil from South African suppliers, will begin importing its oil through Mozambique next year once the Umtali refinery is reopened. Swaziland could relatively simply begin buying its oil from Mozambique. In the case of Botswana oil supplies could be railed in through Zimbabwe. But undoubtedly the one country which would be severely effected by an oil embargo would be the landlocked enclave of Lesotho. Stockpiling would cushion the effect, and it might be possible to airlift supplies from Maputo, but Lesotho could become one of the casualties of an economic war. Nevertheless, the short-term suffering may be preferable to the long-run problems of being tied into the apartheid economy.

BUT SURELY the Rhodesian story has shown that oil sanctions simply don't work? Rhodesia's survival, however, was due to two factors. First it had a friendly neighbour — South Africa (and, for much of the time, Portuguese-ruled Mozambique) — which was willing to act as an entrepot. South Africa has no friends, only a belt of black-ruled states to the north, and its exposed southern coastline.

Secondly, and equally important, Rhodesia's survival depended on Britain's lack of political will in enforcing the oil embargo. We now know that Wilson's administration was aware that Shell and BP were supplying oil to the rebel regime. But nothing was done to halt the flow. If the British Government had taken a tough stand on sanctions-busting then Smith would indeed have been toppled within 'weeks rather than months'.

The lesson of the Rhodesian experience is not that sanctions never work — only that a degree of political determination is necessary to make them effective.

Contempt & the Ripper squad

PETER WILLIAM SUTCLIFFE is innocent. The British press, radio and television, with few exceptions, did not regard that as OK earlier this week. A charge against Sutcliffe of murdering Jacqueline Hill, a Leeds University student, led the media into an orgy of character reference that only thinly veiled a presumption of the accused's guilt. The Solicitor General was right to rebuke the media; but the West Yorkshire police are also to blame.

In the past the *NS* has urged the police to be more open with the public, to disclose more of the information they held. But our respective positions evidently reversed once the charging of a suspect became imminent.

The way the Ripper squad officers, led by their grinning chief constable, jubilantly orchestrated the mass publicity that followed, the critical flaws in their detection strategies over five years, and their serious mishandling of the public response, all need considerably more exposure and examination. The *NS* will do that following the trial of Peter Sutcliffe, whatever its outcome.

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Revealed: Rentokil's hidden risks

ELSPETH McVEIGH discloses what you, and the Government, ought to know about Rentokil and cancer.

SIX WEEKS AGO Marcus Fox, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Environment, was asked whether the Government had any plans to restrict the use of an active ingredient used by Rentokil to treat dry rot and woodworm. Fox said no. The ingredient's behaviour, he replied, 'is fairly well understood, and its use does not appear to be displaying adverse environmental effects.'

Yet less than two weeks later the American government announced that the ingredient, pentachlorophenol (PCP), causes cancer. The US Environmental Protection Agency are now actively considering withdrawing PCP's licence for use.

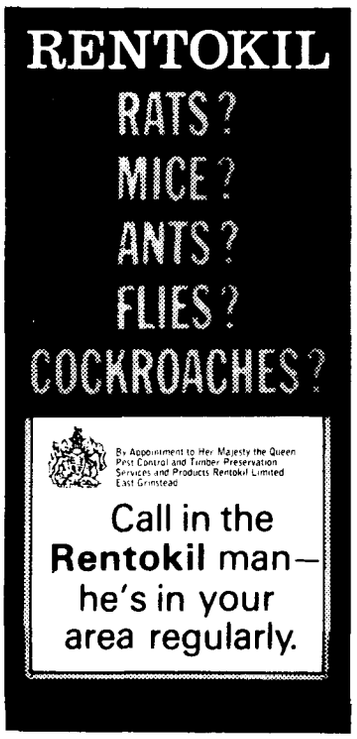
The tests undertaken by the National Toxicology Program of the US Department of Health and Human Services, released on 9 December, revealed the contaminants found in all commercial PCP caused liver cancers in male and female mice and female rats. Compounds found to be carcinogenic in these bioassays are generally regarded by the US government as causing cancer in humans.

The contaminants are various forms of hexachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (HCDD) a close relative of textrachlorodioxin. In Britain DoE officials admit that when they answered the parliamentary question they did not even know the US government were making a study of PCP let alone that it would conclude that the chemical can cause cancer. They are now going to examine the US study.

PCP is an extensively used wood preservative in Britain. Nobody manufactures it here but over 400 tonnes were imported in 1979. It is used to kill pests, bacteria, algae, fungus and weeds. As a fungicide and herbicide it is used in adhesives, oils, paints and rubber. Its most common use in the home is for the treatment of timber for dry rot and woodworm. PCP is the main ingredient and main constituent in such well known products as Rentokil, Protin and Solignum.

The most worrying feature of the widespread use of PCP is its entry into the human foodchain. In 1977 an international symposium discussed the environmental effects of PCP. The participants agreed that 'Contamination of human populations with PCP at a level of 10 to 20 parts per billion is quite general in industrialised countries.' The most likely source of this contamination appears to be foodchain exposure to PCP treated wood products.

Monsanto manufactured PCP in Britain until 1978 when production was discontinued for health and commercial reasons. The company agrees that PCP is contaminated with hexachlorodioxin to a level of 10 parts per million and with octochlorodioxin to the much greater level of 5 to 10 thousand parts per million.



Other countries have acted on PCP. As early as 1970 Sweden became alerted to its hazard when its use as a control agent in paper manufacturing was shown to be upsetting the ecological balance of nearby rivers and lakes. Its use for this purpose was banned. Later Swedish studies revealed that timber workers were being affected by PCP while dipping wood and inhaling PCP in sawdust. Since the beginning of 1980 PCP has been banned in Sweden as a wood preservative. □

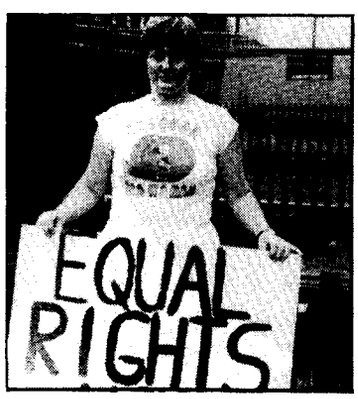
Women take sexist cue from snooker

Women's rights campaigners have started attacking one of their hardest targets — the working man's club. MARION BOWMAN reports from the battlefront.

THE CAMPAIGN began just over a year ago. Sheila Capstick, a long-standing member of Wakefield City Working Men's Club, was banned from playing snooker — solely because she was a woman. Out of this incident has blossomed ERICCA — the Equal Rights in Clubs Campaign for Action. To its somewhat contrived name one should add its inventive slogan: 'A woman's right to cues' (an echo from the abortion rights movement).

Nobody, however, should be fooled into underestimating ERICCA's seriousness of purpose. More is at stake than access to a male-dominated sport.

Like knitting in pubs, the image of a woman with a snooker cue in her hand is too much for many men to take.



Sheila Capstick with her poster

Visions of the jousting tournament, of chivalry and all the male chauvinism it entails, can be conjured up as a man approaches the snooker table with his cue/lance poised. But what happens to masculinity when women enter that arena of ritual, display and skill?

ERICCA is controversial because its target is the Club and Institute Union, the umbrella organisation for the sports and social wing of the labour movement. The CIU has two million members, all men; 4,000 clubs. While a handful of clubs affiliated to the CIU have equal rights for their male and female members, the vast majority confine women to second class status.

The general pattern is that there are 'Members' and 'Lady Members', who pay a reduced subscription, are often 'joined' by their husband's membership, and whose influence on club management is severely restricted. Despite their traditional, and important, role of fund-raisers, women cannot vote, stand for office, nominate for office, bring guests into the club, or use the 'men only' rooms, which are frequently the games rooms; hence the disputes over women playing snooker.

In addition, since women cannot affiliate to the CIU, they cannot hold the CIU pass-card which gives holders access to every CIU-affiliated club, and they cannot represent the clubs of which they are members at the CIU's annual conference.

This system of apartheid is growing increasingly unacceptable to women who expect, and demand, equality in their social lives as well as at work and in their unions. One of the few clubs which does have equal rights, the AEU Club in Eccles, Manchester, faced the prospect of sending its snooker team, which includes a woman, to play a fixture at another CIU club nearby which has a white line painted on the floor of the games room over which no woman must venture.

'We were going to organise a picket at the club when the time came for our snooker team to go there,' said Madge Harwood, the AEU Club's Treasurer. 'But the venue's been changed and they're coming here. But we don't intend to leave it at that. My son told me they have men only bingo sessions there on Sunday dinner times.'

ERICCA's first significant sortie was to the CIU's annual conference in Blackpool last April where 200 women and men lobbied the delegates. Hostility to the women's cause was such that when *Morning Star* reporter Frankie Rickford entered the conference hall, she was given a slow handclap. But the campaign's support among trades councils and Labour parties, which have strong links with clubs, is growing, and they hope to get a motion about equal rights through various clubs and onto the CIU agenda next year.

At their own conference recently, they also decided to consider pressing for fresh legislation, since part of the problem is that discrimination against women in private clubs was exempted from the Sex Discrimination Act.

The Equal Opportunities Commission, which has a statutory duty to review British equality law, has shown considerable interest in ERICCA's struggle. ERICCA is now seeking EOC support for an amendment to the Sex Discrimination Act which would close a legal loophole that suits the ▷

Tom Litterick

TOM LITTERICK won more battles than he would probably admit: notably he won a libel action last year against a number of tabloid papers that had traduced him with a venom unusual even by their standards. But this week Tom lost the final battle against the ill-health that had dogged him in recent years. He died at the age of 51 after a sudden heart attack.

I first knew Tom when I was Secretary of the Birmingham Selly Oak constituency Labour Party, the seat he won in October 1974. He was a good candidate but, on appearances, no better than many who were fighting Tory-held marginals.

The House of Commons transformed him. He ignored the convention that an MP's maiden speech should be polite. Instead he steamed into the Tory values that were responsible for the rotten housing in his constituency and which, he fondly imagined, would be put right by a Labour government.

The failures of the last government made him more of a socialist, not less. On economic and libertarian issues he grew increasingly out of line. It was the pub-bombings in the centre of Birmingham, alongside his precariously marginal constituency, that produced the Prevention of Terrorism Act: it was Tom Litterick who, alone among West Midlands MPs, and almost alone among all MPs, who stood up in Parliament to say it was an undemocratic and unjustified addition to police powers, and no effective help against determined terrorists.

He took cases that were unpopular, especially those with Irish prisoners, victimised BL shop stewards, and Asians who wanted their families to join them in Britain. He suffered cruelly at the hands of the local, and eventually national, press.

After losing Selly Oak in May 1979 his grass roots popularity carried on. Last year he was invited to address as many as 200 meetings (he was an exceptionally compelling speaker). His last public political act was to give up New Year's Day to an NUJ protest outside the South African embassy over the repression of black journalists.

Denis MacShane

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men so well.

ERICCA has implications beyond women's right to have a say in the running of an important institution of working class social life. Like the freemason's lodge, the working men's club acts as a clearing house for information and a place where trade union and political party alliances are forged, and this campaign, by fudging the divisions between work, home life and political activity, promises to have an interesting impact on power relations in the community. □

The bullshit machine 1

The cold war: who is kidding whom?

The first in an occasional series on terminological inexactitudes extruding from the media, government, 'independent' institutions and other solemnly respected authorities. This week: the Institute for Strategic Studies. (Examples for future episodes are invited.)

EACH AUTUMN the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) publishes *The Military Balance,* a handbook of facts and figures about armed forces round the world. It is convenient, well-organised — and widely quoted as an impartial authority on the state of mankind's military muscle.

When the current issue was published last September, therefore, assertions such as 'the US strategic warhead total is 7,301 — 364 below last year's figure'—caused a predictable stir, especially in America. Many newspapers carried a report by the Associated Press news agency under headlines such as 'Soviets Seize Lead In Weapons, International Think Tank Reports' (*Washington Star*). Network television news programmes also carried the gloomy tidings.

Unfortunately the IISS had got a number of its facts wrong. According to one of its counterparts abroad, the Washington-based Center for Defense Information, there are no less than 85 errors in the US and Soviet sections of *Military Balance.* The CDI's Bill Arkin, a former US Army intelligence analyst, says: 'We are concerned because the *Military Balance* has a high reputation and is widely quoted in the American media.'

The CDI sent its 'error list' to the IISS. It challenged the figure for strategic warheads, argued that the US had thousands more troops in Europe than the *Military Balance* reported, and told the IISS that the Americans were adapting 173 B-52G bombers to carry Cruise missiles — 22 more than the *Military Balance* had stated.

It wasn't that the *Military Balance* simply understated US strengths: in some areas it erred in the opposite direction, reporting weapons in the US inventory that had in fact been withdrawn. These included the Hound Dog missile and 105mm self-propelled artillery.

Faced with this daunting catalogue of alleged mistakes the IISS had to perform some deft footwork. It has an arrangement to allow the US *Air Force Magazine* to reproduce sections of the *Military Balance,* and would clearly not wish such errors to be set before an expert American audience.

On 24 October Col Jonathon Alford, the IISS's deputy director, wrote to Clifford Berry of *Air Force Magazine:*

> Dear Mr Berry,
> If it is possible to make amendments before publication in translation (sic), we have become aware of three entries which need correction.
> One page three, paragraph four, line ten, we use the figure of 7301. Delete this and insert 9200. Delete all the following words from '364' to 'strengths'. This is due to the fact that we did not make it clear that the 7301 figure referred only to ICBMs and SLBMs and not to aircraft.
> On page five, column two, under 'ASM' delete 'perhaps 400 Hound Dog' — this missile has been withdrawn from service.
> On page six, column two under 'Deployment: Europe' we have a figure of 206,400. We have now been informed by US official sources that the figure should be 214,165 . . .

When the December issue of Air Force Magazine was published it did, indeed, contain Alford's corrections. Had they appeared in the *Military Balance* in the first place then the scare-reports in the US media would have lost their validity. And a little bit of cold-war hysteria could have been avoided. □

AMERICA

The Haig cover-up

Should the US Senate confirm General Alexander Haig as Ronald Reagan's new Secretary of State? And why is Jimmy Carter holding crucial evidence back from the confirmation hearings? CLAUDIA WRIGHT in Washington discloses what Haig and Carter are hiding.

AS A PRELIMINARY to the confirmation hearing for the new US Secretary of State, General Haig, there was a brief game of musical chairs over the past fortnight in which, at the last split-second, the President removed the chair on which his National Security Adviser, Dr Brzezinski, had confidently thought to place himself.

At issue was a request from Senator Claiborne Pell, the senior Democrat remaining on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, for 'all documents, correspondence or memoranda authored by or directed to General Haig between 1969 and the present.' On Christmas Eve Brzezinski sent Pell a letter refusing the request on the ground that the files 'were subject to a claim of government privilege'.

Many, if not most of what the Senate investigators are after, go back to Haig's involvement in Watergate-related activities for the Nixon White House, in illegal wiretaps placed on National Security staff and journalists by Henry Kissinger, and in decisions made in the early weeks of the Ford administration when Haig was still in charge of the White House. Last Saturday morning, Brzezinski said 'We have nothing to hide, but at the same time we are not going to be partners to some indiscriminate witch hunt.'

The next day, however, the press reported an apparent White House decision to reverse Brzezinski and accede to the Pell request. Hence Brzezinski's apparent embarrassment. But this is not really what has happened at all.

What the White House has all along intended is to prevent the disclosure of communications between Brzezinski and Haig *during the Carter term* when Haig was in Brussels as NATO commander, a post he occupied until June 1979. Pell's initial request threatened to net all of these documents, as well as the earlier files.

When the White House realised from the press reaction to the initial refusal of Pell's request that Carter appeared to be covering up the Republican Watergate, it was decided that if Pell could be persuaded to rephrase his request — 'If he can indicate what specific documents he wants', Brzezinski said — then the White House would agree. Wittingly or unwittingly, Pell fell into the trap. By avoiding the time period that Brzezinski and Carter were most anxious about — their own — Carter was able to reverse himself, and the press got, or thought they got, Brzezinski's tail. Here, however, is what the fox escaped with.

THERE ARE THREE particularly dangerous files that link Haig to White House machinations during the Carter-Brzezinski period. The first involves the Shaba rebellion in Zaire in May and June 1978. What happened was that on 12 May members of the National Front for the Liberation of the Congo attacked the copperbelt towns of southern Zaire, and for a time looked like achieving the military success that had escaped them the year before.

Brzezinski (left) and Haig (right)

The Carter administration had inherited from the Republicans a dilemma about how to proceed with covert operations in Angola and Zaire that had ostensibly been outlawed by Congress in 1973. What the Brzezinski-Haig communications would reveal, if the Foreign Relations Committee really wanted to investigate, is a scheme by the Americans to organise the French-Belgian military support effort, transported in American aircraft and justified by transparent lies offered as CIA intelligence about Cuban involvement, that was eventually able to drive the National Front forces back into their Angolan sanctuaries. This operation Haig, Brzezinski and Carter all knew was illegal and flouted Congressional prohibitions in law since 1973. In hearings on the Zaire 'airlift' the following August this was exactly the charge that was made — unsuccessfully.

The neutron bomb file is the second Brzezinski and co. do not want to see the light of day. It covers the period from late 1977 to April 1978 when the White House, State Department, Pentagon and Arms Control Agency battled each other, and the West European governments, over whether to produce and ultimately deploy the 8-inch artillery shells and *lance* missile warheads that handily exterminate Soviet tank crews streaking across Germany, but leave the nicely restored architecture of the German cities more or less undamaged for the survivors. Haig was (and is) very strongly in favour of the neutron bomb, and had talked almost all

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NATO officers and defence ministers into going along.

He was infuriated, however, by published accounts of Carter indecisiveness on the issue because they encouraged the European Left to press harder for their governments to resist deployment. Unsettled, the Dutch parliament voted in March 1978, not to permit the neutron weapons on its territory. In early April the President then said he would defer production of the warheads and shells.

What the Haig-Brzezinski file would reveal is a calculated effort by both men to compel the President to change his mind. Haig's role was to encourage the West Germans to attack Carter in public and private for betraying them and for exposing Central Europe to an allegedly expanding Soviet tank threat. The record is one of calculated insubordination, an embarrassment for a nominee to a cabinet post whose consistent plea through the Watergate investigations was that he had been a loyal soldier, faithfully taking and executing the orders of his superiors.

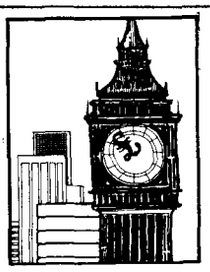
American pressmen and their public have such short memories that exhumation of files on such recondite topics as Zaire and neutron bombs might excite little attention. But file no. three touches a very sensitive point in present sensibilities, and it is the most dangerous of all. This is the Huyser file.

GENERAL ROBERT HUYSER was a deputy of Haig's in Brussels. Among his responsibilities was the coordination of NATO defence plans with the Shah of Iran. In that role he came to know the Iranian General Staff particularly well during 1978, as the Shah's internal position deteriorated. In October that year, State Department files and official testimony now reveal, Ambassador Sullivan reported to Washington that the Shah would fall. Vance urged the President to accommodate himself to new leadership in Iran. But Brzezinski would not let go so easily, and worked tirelessly to promote military escalation by the Shah to save his regime.

To try to resolve the differences between Vance and Brzezinski, it was proposed that General Huyser be sent to Tehran to assess the Shah's chances of survival, and if necessary to encourage his generals to fight with greater gusto. At this point, in November and December 1978, Haig comes strongly into the picture. Published leaks indicate that he told the White House he was adamantly opposed to Huyser's mission to Tehran. He even threatened to resign if Huyser was sent. But on 3 January Huyser flew to Tehran, and Haig stayed loyally at his post.

What the file would reveal about Haig's objections — if objections they were — can only be guessed at. The Senate investigators are not going to probe any further. It may very well be that Haig advocated (as he has said since) heavy American reinforcement for the Iranian army, together with the despatch of aircraft carrier forces capable of carrying the Shah through a showdown with his enemies.

There is considerable evidence — all from State Department sources — that these were Brzezinski's preferred options, and that even as the Shah was forced to take his mid-January 'vacation', some American officials were plotting a military coup to restore him. The Huyser file would contain all the details, and appeal, no doubt, to the political factions in Tehran at the moment who want to put the American hostages on trial. It might even convict some of them.



Peter Kellner, Political Editor

A message for Francis Pym's red box

TOP SECRET
From: The Prime Minister
To: Francis Pym

I DO HOPE you are settling in well in your new post as Leader of the House and co-ordinator of the Government's information services. There is a particular task I want you to do, but first an instruction: don't, whatever you do, tell John Nott how you wheedled extra money out of the cabinet for defence.

For example, let us keep to ourselves just how twitchy I felt when you reminded me of our 1979 manifesto commitment: 'It is clear that significant increases [in defence spending]will be necessary.' If there is one thing I hate it is anyone suggesting that we could ever think of reneging on a manifesto pledge.

Which brings me to the task I have in mind. You are clearly so good at waving the manifesto in front of your critics, that there are some other passages I'd like you to look at. Quite frankly, I'm a bit scared some of our supporters are going to rumble the fact that we are not doing all the things we said we would. What I want you to do is find some arguments — it's more important that they sound good than that they are valid — for defending the ropier bits of our record.

The economy will obviously cause the greatest aggro. Luckily, we were careful to avoid some of the worst hostages to fortune: we never promised, for example, to keep unemployment down — not in so many words, at any rate. There are, though, some other passages that worry me. For example:

> To master inflation, proper monetary discipline is essential, with publicly stated targets for the rate of growth of money supply. At the same time, a gradual reduction in the size of the Government's borrowing requirement is also vital . . . The state takes too much of the nation's income; its share must be steadily reduced.

So far we have screwed up three things there. Our monetary growth is way over target, the borrowing requirement is likely to end up £2 billion higher in the current financial year than it was last year, and — despite our latest cuts — the proportion of Britain's G.N.P. consumed by public spending is still rising.

As far as I can see, these problems will last as long as the recession continues. I'm not sure how to play this: I've let Keith Joseph talk about wasting our first year, but soon we are going to need some fresh excuses. See what you can do.

We are also adrift on our taxation policy. In the manifesto we said:

> It is especially important to cut the absurdly high marginal rates of taxation at both the bottom and top of the income scale. It must pay a man or woman significantly more to be in, rather than out, of work.

Everyone knows we cut the top rates of income tax. Not many people, though, have cottoned on to the fact that we have made the poverty trap worse. By abolishing the reduced rate tax band, and increasing the national insurance rate, we seem to be lowering, rather than raising, the take-home pay of the low-paid worker. You and I know that this is what Toryism is partly about: the trouble is, we've saddled ourselves with all this 'incentives' nonsense, and soon we may have to find ways of talking ourselves out of it.

Then there are the oil companies. Our pre-election energy policy statement said:

> It will be important to restore the confidence of the oil industry in the fair dealing of British governments. It needs a clear assurance that there will not be countless changes in the rules and that there will be full consultation.

It was a nasty moment for me when the oil companies complained that Geoffrey Howe's November package — when he announced a new oil tax *without* consulting them — broke that promise. And I have a fear that we shall soon have to eat our manifesto words about 'tax and licensing policies [that] encourage new production.' We seem to have a somewhat uncertain public posture: it's not clear whether we're for or against the oil companies. Could you sort out our image on this?

On public sector pay, I fear we will have a bumpy ride during the next three months. According to our manifesto:

> Pay bargaining in central and local government . . . is conducted under a variety of arrangements, some of long standing, such as pay research. *In consultation with the unions,* we will reconcile these with the cash limits used to control public spending. (emphasis added)

As with the oil companies, it's hard to pretend that we bothered with any consultations before deciding on a six per cent pay norm, and decided to ignore civil service pay research findings. Luckily, there's little public sympathy for civil servants; even so, we are likely to have some presentational problems of the first water. Any ideas?

Finally, we haven't done all our supporters wanted on the closed shop. We said:

> All agreements for a closed shop must be drawn up in line with the best practice followed at present and only if an overwhelming majority of the workers involved vote for it by secret ballot. We shall therefore propose a statutory code under Section 6 of the 1975 Employment Protection Act.

We did produce a code, of course; but Jim Prior managed to persuade us not to make it a *statutory* code, so the formal legal position hasn't really changed. I hope that sacking Norman St John Stevas (if there is one thing worse than a wet, it's a wet wit) will give Jim Prior a warning not to try anything too soggy next time. Meanwhile, we will need some ammunition in reserve for when the next nasty closed shop dust-up happens, and our backbenchers discovered we have no effective way of dealing with it.

P.S. If there is a reply to this memo, don't leak it to the Press Association this time, eh?

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The true cost of sanctions

Sanctions against South Africa would be too costly in terms of British jobs at risk: true or false? BARBARA ROGERS and BRIAN BOLTON* have done the first detailed analysis of the price British workers might have to pay, and uncover some surprisingly flimsy thinking in the pro-apartheid lobby, and among Common Market bureaucrats in Brussels.

SOUTH AFRICAN PROPAGANDA, like any other, relies on constant repetition, through as many different channels as possible — advertisements, carefully fostered newspaper comment, the statements of interested companies, and finally the repetition of pro-South African opinion as if it were fact.

Increasingly, South Africa's immense public relations network is being geared to the arguments against sanctions. The most consistent and most successful theme is the threat to our own interests: tens of thousands of jobs lost, whole industries going under. At the same time, there is the sub-theme: sanctions will destroy the jobs of many blacks inside South Africa and be very damaging to their interests.

These arguments have had a profound impact on British thinking. Taken to their logical conclusion, they suggest that we could not afford to upset South Africa because of the tremendous dependence we apparently have on the apartheid regime.

This line of thinking, however, is somewhat perverse. It is a recipe for appeasing a system that even its strongest financial supporters see cannot last indefinitely. If South Africa were indeed of crucial importance to British industry, what are we doing shoring up a regime that is vulnerable to the actions of the disaffected majority of its people — where a sudden political conflagration could result in the kind of total breakdown of its international trade that we have recently witnessed in Iran?

If there is one indisputable lesson to be learned from western support for right-wing dictatorships in Portugal, Greece, Spain and elsewhere, it is that the longer they last, the worse is the chaos when they are finally overpowered.

The argument that we cannot afford to lose our trade with South Africa should, then, be a source of worry. It ought logically to prompt a policy of disengagement, with businessmen diversifying away from South African links as quickly as possible — to avoid the horrors of a sudden collapse. First we need to establish exactly how important South Africa really is to us.

TEN YEARS AGO, a favourite theme of South African propaganda was that the Republic was our third largest export market. Why, now, such a strange silence on the part of the PR machine on this topic? Where does South Africa stand now, in the league table of our export markets? Let's not say it too loud . . . *fourteenth,* in the first ten months of 1980. In 1967, South Africa took some five per cent of Britain's exports. In 1979-80 the proportion was . . . 1.8 per cent. In real terms, the value of our exports to South Africa has fallen significantly, as has the volume. Meanwhile, trade with many other countries has risen — Nigeria alone is now twice as important to us as South Africa.

What is perhaps most striking in any evaluation of British exports to South Africa is the large number of sectors in the economy that are virtually uninvolved. They include agriculture, food processing, service industries generally, and many manufacturing sectors particularly in the field of consumer goods. Equally striking is the fact that most companies in Britain do not export regularly to South Africa. The products involved are concentrated in the areas dominated by the giant multinationals — chemicals, plastics and mechanical engineering, which are also very capital-intensive and therefore involve relatively few jobs.

On the other hand — and this is something the South Africans keep *very* quiet about — some important employment sectors in Britain are adversely affected by South African exports to this country. Fruit is an example obvious to the everyday shopper, with greengrocers selling South African apples at a time when British apple-growers are having a hard time. In 1979 we imported £19m of apples from South Africa.

The phantom figures merry-go-round

Less visible but as important is steel. South Africa itself uses only the metric system — yet it continues to produce steel to the old imperial measures. Britain is now the only country buying such steel in any quantity. In 1979 Britain bought £21m worth of steel from South Africa.

The loss-making British Steel Corporation actually contributes to the problem. Its subsidiary Stewarts & Lloyds negotiated a record £150 million 'export credit' from the British government ten years ago to modernise its plant in South Africa. The list of overseas subsidiaries that BSC management is now considering selling does *not* include those in South Africa.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to state precisely how many British jobs have been lost as a result of dumping by South African producers.

Campaigning for sanctions: Anti-Apartheid posters

It is, though, widely recognised that British orchards are being torn up, and many jobs lost, for want of a steady domestic market; and the steel industry is manifestly a disaster area for unemployment — with cheap imports, notably from South Africa and Brazil, contributing to the industry's problems.

Ending trade with South Africa, then, has a two-way effect: *some* export jobs would be lost, but *some* import-substitution jobs would be gained. The anti-sanctions lobby ignores this point. It concentrates only on the British exports side of the equation. On this the lobby is confidently dramatic — and dramatically incompetent.

Our quest for evidence begins with the United Kingdom-South Africa Trade Association (UKSATA). It claims[1] that 'increased unemployment estimated at 70,000' would directly result from sanctions — and a further 180,000 jobs would be lost indirectly. UKSATA gives its source for the 70,000 estimate as 'Report by Centre for Business Economics, Witwatersrand University (1978)'. The report in question was written by a South African economist called Arndt Spandau[2].

Spandau does indeed mention a figure of 70,000 (though not the much higher 250,000 cited by UKSATA). But Spandau does not claim to have arrived at this figure by original research. He refers the reader instead to 'calculations submitted by the British Confederation of Industries.'

No such organisation exists. We take it Spandau means the Confederation of British Industry. The CBI has produced no figures of its own on this. But it is very close to — UKSATA. Back to square one. We are contin-

How UKSATA justifies its 70,000 job-loss estimate

> links that consequently exist. Apart from the obvious losses that would accrue to the British economy from a trade boycott, (losses that would almost certainly provide a corresponding gain to Britain's trading competitors), **increased unemployment estimated at 70,000** would result in Britain,[2] since **alternative markets for many of these exports are simply not available.**

*Barbara Rogers and Brian Bolton are co-authors of a study, *Sanctions against South Africa: myth and reality,* for the Holland Committee on Southern Africa.

2 Source Report by Centre for Business Economics Witwatersrand University (1978)

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uing to seek a possible source in original research for the source of UKSATA's 'calculations'; but on the evidence so far, there seems to be none.

ONE LIKELY reason why the calculations are so elusive is that they are difficult to do properly. Relatively simple sums — like relating trade to average levels of output per worker — are useless. First, they ignore the particular pattern of our trade with South Africa. Second, more importantly, any attempt to assess overall effects from macro-economic statistics needs to make assumptions, which can be varied at will, on all sorts of secondary consequences of a sanctions policy. It is even possible to formulate a policy that would leave Britain overall with more jobs (for example, a devaluation of sterling accompanied by a vigorous import substitution policy). Particular jobs in some export sectors would still be lost, of course; but other jobs elsewhere in the economy could be generated instead.

Having said that, a number of exporting jobs are at risk. The question is, how many? We have done a sector-by-sector, company-by-company analysis — the only way to do the sums properly. We have examined every product where South Africa took more than one per cent of our exports. An example of how we accumulate the true picture is given in the box.

Our conclusion is that 13,000 to 14,000 jobs are involved in sales to South Africa. This total includes identifiable knock-on effects — such as the automobile components industry, which supplies UK motor manufacturers who then sell the finished product to South Africa.

It may well be argued that there are other jobs less directly dependent on sales to South Africa, which would also be at risk if a full-blown sanctions policy were applied. But set against that:

- The figures for 1977 are inflated because of the inclusion of exports to Rhodesia, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and even some other countries, which went via South Africa.
- Current levels of exports to the region have fallen since 1977.
- Many of the 1977 exports involved 'one-off' deals with no continuing dependence on the South African market.
- Many of the products would be marketable in other countries, or in some cases in the domestic market, to compensate for the loss of South African sales.
- Several of the 'jobs', especially in the smaller companies, in fact represent a small part of the work of many people, none of whom would be made redundant as a result of losing the South African market.
- Especially in the multinationals, workers can be switched from one product to another.

Ultimately, as we have said, the actual net cost to UK employment from applying sanctions will depend on many factors outside the scope of this (or any similar) analysis. We can confidently state, however, that it *cannot* be as high as the number the South Africa lobby is putting around.

When the crunch comes, we can expect many employers to make exaggerated claims about the effect of losing South African sales, as an excuse for redundancies which they want to impose on workers for quite different reasons — a familiar enough tactic used by employers against the unions. This is in itself an important reason for us to do our own calculations, so that we can refute such false claims.

In the meantime, it is clearly important for us to reduce still further the number of people who could be adversely affected by a break in trade with South Africa, by diversifying away from this dwindling and unstable market. For this, the power lies not so much with Whitehall but with the Commission of the European Community in Brussels. To examine the reality of EEC trade dealings with South Africa, we paid these ostensibly apolitical Eurocrats a visit. What we found in Brussels was an appearance of public disapproval of *apartheid,* concealing a reality of heavy preference for its products.

Doing the sums: a case study

SOURCES of information on trade with South Africa are varied, not always mutually consistent, and sometimes published after long intervals. To assess the potential impact of sanctions on jobs, we examined: South African import figures, UK export figures, UK industrial data on production and employment, and individual company data. We assembled a complete set of available data for 1977; changes since then are likely to be small — and in the direction of reducing further the figure for jobs at risk.

By way of illustration, this is how we estimated the likely impact of sanctions on ICI's plastics exports to South Africa.

As no direct figures for the number of ICI employees working at any time on South African orders exist — and the number will, of course, vary from time to time — a series of assumptions needed to be made, It is in the nature of the assumptions we made that any single one may be wrong in isolation — but in that case it would be compensated for in figures for other products or companies. So if our eventual figure for the jobs at risk in plastics in ICI is too low, in the case of other ICI divisions, or other plastics exporters, it will be too high. In aggregate, any errors should balance out.

3.2 per cent of British 'plastics industry' exports went to South Africa. ICI employed 154,000 people in the UK in 1977, and had a UK turnover of £2.9 billion. Turnover per employee was thus £18,883. Total plastics turnover in ICI was £602m. We assumed an even proportion of plastics to total production throughout the group worldwide, and estimated UK plastics turnover at £375m. This was a quarter of total plastics output in the UK that year.

The company is listed as exporting polyamides and cellulosics. We proceeded to estimate the sales of these in more detail.

ICI exported 36 per cent of its UK turnover in 1977. Applying that percentage to plastics suggests a plastics export figure of £134m. We assumed that this is divided among individual products broadly in the same proportions as in the industry as a whole — that is, 6.1 per cent cellulosics and 1.5 per cent polyamide. We modified these figures further by the known properties of UK exports of these products sold to South Africa: 4.5 per cent and 25 per cent respectively.

This suggests a revenue of £500,000 from ICI's polyamide exports to South Africa, and £369,000 from cellulosics. Dividing the £869,000 total by the figure for ICI's turnover per employee gives us an estimate of 46 ICI jobs linked to the company's plastics exports to South Africa.

How Brussels gives apartheid a boost

IF THERE IS one area where the EEC has a stranglehold over British policy, it is in the field of trade with non-EEC countries. Faceless Eurocrats, without accountability to the European or the British Parliament, have taken over these dealings almost entirely. What is more, despite a theoretical commitment to a 'daylight' policy, the European Commission is even more secretive about these deals than the mandarins of Whitehall.

At least the old Commonwealth Preference enjoyed by South Africa on so many commodities was public knowledge, as were any special deals on items subject to seasonal or other fluctuations in supply and demand. In Brussels, all this information is on the computer — and only those who programme it have access codes to release the data.

This anonymous, ostensibly European, system was in fact set up by conservative Brits. A major part of the negotiations for which Christopher Soames was responsible, for Britain's membership of the EEC, concerned the interests of countries which would be affected by the loss of Commonwealth Preference: the old White Commonwealth, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and — although carefully unmentioned in the public statements — South Africa.

There had been something like panic in South Africa, particularly among the white farmers, about the prospect of losing the preferential access to the British market for fruit, vegetables and other produce which could not compete on an equal basis with suppliers nearer home. Exports of food surpluses or of luxury items yielding higher returns are vital to the maintenance of high prices within South Africa for basic food items such as maize, wheat, milk, eggs and fruit for the white farmers who have sole access to the nation-wide Marketing Boards.

The fears proved groundless. South Africa was given the same generous treatment as the other white Commonwealth countries, with a gradual phasing out of Commonwealth Preference over a number of years, matched by direct access to the Commission for the negotiation of special deals on each commodity in turn. As a Commissioner, Soames installed his protégé Lesley Fielding to supervise the department dealing with South Africa. He has since been replaced by a French nominee, with two Italians in charge of day-to-day contacts with the hundred or more South African representatives and 'advisers' representing marketing boards, special interests, and trading organisations as well as representatives of the Government itself.

Any pretence that Commission officials are politically neutral was quickly dispelled by an interview we had with Luciano Cao, the person on the South Africa desk. Mr Cao informed us that deals with South Africa were based on three factors:

- 'The South Africans are white' and have blood ties to Europeans — in fact they are, themselves, European. There were also common material interests, a major market for Europe and a source of vital mineral and energy resources.
- In order to solve the problems of Africa, including not only Namibia and the neighbouring States but also Angola, 'the Congo' and even Nigeria, one had to consider South Africa, an important naval base
- At least a dozen countries in Africa had links with South Africa, therefore there was no real pressure on the EEC to reduce its own dealings there.

WE FOUND SUCH sentiments common

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among EEC officials. Their attitude is of immense importance to South Africa. Special quotas, tariffs and seasonal concessions are provided, which apply particularly to steel and some minerals, as well as to agricultural produce. No action is taken under the various provisions of the Treaty of Rome against South Africa's practice of dumping, despite the recognition by many officials that this is what is happening.

This is particularly serious because the items in question are often those in over-supply within the EEC itself, and therefore of prime importance to employment levels within the Community. One of the more bizarre arguments that we came across was the notion that because the South African market was 'indispensable' to European trade — a most dubious argument for Britain, as we have suggested, and even weaker for the other eight members of the EEC — one should be prepared to sacrifice European workers in sectors which are undermined by South African dumping.

The result of this unofficial but powerful policy of preference for South Africa is that it enjoys better access to the EEC — the world's largest trading bloc — than the African, Caribbean and Pacific States which have a formal association with the Community in terms of the Lomé Convention. This connection is important not only to the Third World countries involved but also to the EEC, which aims by this means to guarantee its access to the mineral and other natural resources of the 'ACP' countries.

Take oranges, those ubiquitous Outspan and Cape products which form the bulk of South Africa's fruit exports. At the height of their harvest season they bear a tariff of only 4 per cent or 6 per cent, which compared with a 13 per cent tariff barrier to oranges from the associated States of North Africa. No wonder, then, that it is so hard to mount a consumer boycott of Outspan oranges: the Eurocrats have made sure that they are better value for money.

The official line of the EEC, in public, is uncompromising opposition to *apartheid* and a refusal to deal with the South African Government on any official level. Indeed, the 'liberals' dealing with the Lomé Convention countries have succeeded in turning away delegations of bantustan chiefs and others. They cite opposition from the ACP countries to any dealings with South Africa, and strong resolutions in the joint EEC-ACP parliamentary forum. They seem to be speaking in good faith, since the left hand of the EEC Commission was totally unaware of the innumerable dealings by the right hand with the South African representatives in Brussels. They have no access to the key computer data on all the various agreements, from formal documents down to the 'gentlemen's agreements' drawn up by fellow-Europeans.

Some of them, it would seem, are oblivious of the fact that the great majority of South Africans are *not* Europeans. Is the EEC adopting a blatantly racist identity? How long will trade preferences continue to be given on this basis? What will the Eurocrats tell the ACP states about this policy? As far as we know, there has not so far been any public discussion on this issue, a crucial one in the context of any debate on imposing sanctions. □

1. *British Trade with South Africa: A question of National Interest,* published by UKSATA; 45 Great Peter St, London SW1, 1979.
2. *The Consequences of a Hypothetical Economic Boycott on South Africa.*

BRITISH LEYLAND

British Leyland tries again

PATRICK WINTOUR argues the unions have not yet been defeated

'WE WERE AS concerned, if not more concerned, about the intimidation as we were about the vandalism'. The words of Harold Musgrove, chairman and managing director of Austin Morris, explaining the management's decision to sack eight Leyland workers for the demonstration cum riot at Longbridge on 21 November. Musgrove was talking of physical intimidation but intimidation, by letter and broadcast, is not a practice unknown to the current Leyland management. For instance, when the 1,000 strikers went to their meeting on Sunday morning to decide whether to continue their action in support of their sacked colleagues, they went in the knowledge that Mrs Thatcher had already threatened to cut government money to Leyland, that the Leyland board were preparing to meet within days of the strike continuing to close down the light cars division and finally, that if they did not report for work on Monday they would be sacked.

Matters were not made any easier for the strikers, or the local Transport union leaders, by the refusal of the AUEW to join the TGWU in making the strike official. The Sunday meeting repeatedly pressed AUEW district organiser Bill Jordan asking: if the meeting decided to continue the strike on Monday would he instruct his members to cross TGWU picket lines? He failed to give a clear reply, saying that his union's executive could not make the strike official since they had not yet received a request to do so yet from the relevant district committee.

The Transport union's own hand was slightly weakened by differences between their national official Grenville Hawley and the regional leadership. Hawley had been much more keen on compromise. On Monday the 29th a meeting at ACAS of the two full negotiating teams broke up with no agreement on the nature of a another inquiry into the eight sackings. No further meetings were envisaged. But on the Wednesday Hawley along with his AUEW counterpart Ken Cure met with management again at Leyland's training centre. Hawley's fellow TGWU negotiators — regional secretary Brian Mathers, district secretary John Barker and Longbridge convenor Jack Adams — were not told of the meeting by Hawley until he rang Adams in the evening to ask him to look at a fresh agreement. An annoyed Adams refused to come down on New Year's Eve. The next day the full TGWU negotiating team refused Hawley's compromise since the management, after 14 hours would give no assurances on the penultimate paragraph on how much notice they would take of the views of an independent chairman. But by the Sunday the combined effect of the uncertainties within the TGWU, the prospect of the whole of Longbridge being shut and the imminence of an inter-union row was enough to suspend the strike. No assurance had been extracted on the chairman's powers.

Sunday's decision, despite that, does not represent a clear-cut defeat for the unions. Leyland management, confident after a series of undoubted victories, thought they could sack the stewards with a minimum loss of shifts and little publicity; in that they have been proved wrong. Instead they are now on the defensive. As Jack Adams, the union convenor of the Longbridge factory told Sunday's meeting the management's word would now be tested and justice would have to be seen to be done. Bill Jordan also told the meeting that three concessions had been wrung from management. The independent chairman from the conciliation service ACAS would be able to record whose evidence he believed. The company would withdraw sackings where in their eyes reasonable doubt is established. The sacked workers would be paid in the interim by the company through their unions. These are not inconsiderable concessions. As ACAS themselves admit it is very rare for them to arbitrate over dismissals.

Brian Mathers of the TGWU and Bill Jordan of the AUEW after Sunday's vote to suspend the BL strike.

The inadequacies of the management's previous inquiry show why ACAS are needed. Initially, the company gave the sacked workers only 24 hours to prepare their defence. It was only after a series of telephone calls from Brian Mathers to Leyland management that the deadline was extended to five days. The sacked workers were unable to see the prosecution witness statements, let alone undertake cross-examinations. By contrast, management had the anonymous statements of the defence witnesses read out to them. In the general atmosphere of fear it had not been easy for the sacked workers to gather these statements. Symptomatic of the climate of suspicion was an incident when some anonymous defence statements were being taken with company permission in a company office by the TGWU's John Barker. He saw people in a building opposite apparently observing the interviews. Barker rushed across the road and found the door to the room barred by chairs. When he finally broke in, the mysterious figures had left by another exit.

Despite such a climate some of the sacked workers had as many as 20 witnesses. But, inevitably, sentences were based on which of the witnesses the management chose to believe and; not surprisingly, the inquiry and appeal teams — made up of three managers — preferred to

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believe the statements their side had gathered.

It was only a week after the appeals and the subsequent strike that management provided union officials with a folder of prosecution statements. In the new inquiry members of the five-man investigation including two union men may cross-examine witnesses so some of the conflicting evidence may be probed.

The inquiry will also have to make some decisions about the legitimate role of a steward. For instance, one of the sacked stewards who insists his role was pacificatory, Jim Denham, faced two charges. First that at 11.00 he had been the ringleader of an unruly mob that entered CAB-2 and obstructed the Metro recovery line throwing small fixings onto the track. And second at 1.30 he had been the leader of a similar mob throwing a pipewrench halting the Allegro line. When Denham attended his hearing the management admitted they had no witness that had seen him throwing things around but that he had been prominent in the mob which had thrown them. In their view someone who is prominent is a ringleader. He was sacked, a decision upheld on appeal. As Denham says: 'The new inquiry will have to decide whether stewards by virtue of being a steward are responsible for any trouble in their section.'

The 40-odd prosecution witnesses are supervisors, most of whom are ASTMS members. Yet even senior ASTMS members at Longbridge cast doubt on the validity of some of the evidence. They report considerable pressure being applied by management to secure statements about particular individuals. One said 'It obviously looks good on your record if you've come forward with evidence.' ASTMS has been divided over its role. In a pre-Christmas meeting the Longbridge ASTMS representatives agreed to disagree over what they should do. Some said the stewards deserved to be sacked. Others sympathised with the manual workers over excessive top management pressure to keep the Metro line working continuously. The regime has been particularly wearing on the foremen who have to supervise the line: it is also producing a lot of Metros in need of repair.

Some foremen are taking it out on the manual workers. Others are resigning. In Unit 2 where the Metro is built 25 per cent of foremen have applied for voluntary redundancy as have 40 per cent of superintendents.

The ACAS-chaired inquiry went through the causes of the riot in less than a day this Tuesday before moving on to individual cases. A proper inquiry into the causes of the riot would look at the whole bullying Edwardes style, but in the short-term it might look at four issues.

- Did BL management two years ago promise not to outsource labour intensive work such as seatbuilding in return for the introduction of labour saving new technology in the Metro body plant? (Management's unilateral decision to oursource led to the blacking of the outsourced seats when they arrived on 20 November which in turn led to the lay-offs that provoked the demonstration.)
- Why did management abandon this year a long established 6a agreement not to lay day workers off without two hour's warning and not lay the night shift off at all after 10.00?
- Why did management refuse a union offer, made the week before the strike, to run a rota system keeping some men in to do rectification work in the event of the need for lay-offs. Did the line superintendents agree to run such a rota which would have had a degree of equity but management refuse unless they alone decided who to keep in?
- Why has the Leyland union structure bred such a general mood of resentment in which such a riot could take place? Why are the large plants, Longbridge and Cowley, and the main union the TGWU so badly under-represented on the national Leyland union structures? Because each convenor from all the 34 plants may attend the 200 strong convenor's conference, regardless of how few men he represents, the conference is unbalanced. A T&G Convenor with 5,000 members has the same vote as a UCATT Convenor with 50. The AUEW makes up 56 per cent of the conference although it has only 23 per cent of the total manual workforce while the TGWU takes 27 per cent of the conference though it has 55 per cent of the workforce. The electricians are also heavily over-represented. Similarly on the smaller 26 man joint negotiating committee which bargains over wages the 14 seats reserved for craft unions can outvote the TGWU. Three senior T&G stewards have made recommendations to reform these rotten boroughs, but they need to be implemented soon before many more pay deals are imposed on big plants like Longbridge breeding the kind of resentment we saw on the 21 November. □

John McVicar's sporting life

Champagne and poker faces in W8

AT THE END OF one of the roads which T-junction into Kensington High Street there is one of those 19th century houses of the rich, typical of this part of London, that once inside seem to go on forever and which long before even our Thatcherite times were only viable as hotel or flatlet conversions. The bottom bell notifies you that this particular house contains one of London's flourishing gaming clubs.

Pressing the club button during racing hours or at any time any night of the week will get you an answering buzz which releases the door catch. Inside the hallway, a TV camera will track you to an unmarked door to the right which will only open if your face on the monitor downstairs is recognised.

A corridor and a flight of stairs takes you into the spiel or the club as it fronts up for anyone in straightland outside the front door. If you could get any 'action' out of bridge, doubtless they'd play it down at the club because anything which quickens the betting pulse is played by its members.

Opposite the stairs is a plaque bearing the club's rules — one of which states: 'No illegal GAMING or BETTING allowed on these premises.' Such an interdict doesn't have much force for people who, if the fancy took them, would bet on whose mother was going to die first. Mainly, however, the action is horse-racing, rummy,

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kalooki, poker and, occasionally, dice.

I went in to observe rather than play. Frank, a long-time friend of mine who has a piece of the club, helloed me onto a stall by the snack counter in the corner of the room. He launched into his rundown on how much he'd lost that day. 'I must be bang out of form. I swore to myself that I wouldn't back anything today but Harry's come down with some tale about a certainty and got me at it. Stone last. Never even got a mention. Three hundred quid.'

I asked him if he was going to play in the poker game which was already underway behind me on the big oval table. 'I'd like to but sitting down with under a grand is like diving into the crocodile pond at London Zoo. Look, they're like a bunch of crocodiles — they just gobble you up. And afterwards they're know to the pound how much each of 'em had of your dough. That's how they play — to the percentages, to the odds.'

I laughed more at Frank's way of putting it than in the disbelief which he laid on me in order to cue himself up for the rest of his dialogue. 'No. I'm telling you John. Greeks are amazing gamblers but they're pitiless. They're brought up on it over there. They all sit around in the villages playing backgammon while their women have kids.'

I LOOKED AT the poker game behind me. Of the six players circling out from Kiley, the Chinese dealer, three were Greeks. The fluorescent strip light on chains above them was gently rocking from the draft of the big revolving fan in the top corner of the room. Kiley snapped out the cards, calling them as they turned, naming the bets as they were made, not reacting to any jokes or comments by the players. At one in the morning the game was still fairly tame, the pots rarely climbing above a couple of hundred quid. Only one of the other two tables was in use — four guys who I'd known at various times in the nick were playing kalooki.

Frank ordered two teas without sugar from one of the two girls who run the canteen and keep everything tidy. He then said, 'Nancy this is John the guy who wrote the article which I showed you.'

Nancy stopped making the tea and respectfully acknowledged me. As I knew the two girls were Iranians and that their English wasn't too clever, I queried how Nancy could have read the piece.

'No she couldn't read it 'cause she can't sort of read English but she looked at it. But they're not peasants; they got stranded over here when the Shah got the elbow. At Christmas they bought me and Mick a bottle of Taittingers each. Most birds would buy Moet or, if they were really trying, Dom Perignon. So it goes to show. They can't believe their luck landing up down here — people putting tenners in their hands for making them a sandwich and cup of tea.'

We turned, looking at the poker. I asked Frank about a nondescript guy to the dealer's right who was winning some and losing some but without showing much interest. 'Good gambler — fearless. When he blows out he just goes back to Ireland and comes back a few weeks later with chunks. He's the best burglar that country's ever produced. I wish he'd spend some of his money on some clothes though — he's had that coat on for months.'

THE OTHER DEALER stood in for Kiley who came over to Frank and me at the tea counter. Before Frank drifted off to watch the kalooki, he ribbed Kiley. 'Here he is: the best croupier in London. No, England. He knows he could skin these mugs alive' — he indicated the table Kiley had just vacated — 'but whatever he gets never lasts past the last race.'

As Frank walked off, Kiley confirmed it: 'I could as well. I can play. But the gambling ruins me.' Suddenly the game came alight and there was a pot for £750. 'Look, seven-hundred and fifty pounds. Some people never see that kind of money in their whole life and that is nothing to these people. Nothing. None of them are normal — no gambler is. They don't work. They care about nothing except winning.'

'But why do they gamble, Kiley?'

'I don't know.' Perhaps the stupidity of acknowledging ignorance about an activity to which he was himself addicted to made him revise his answer. 'Greed,' he said emphatically. 'Gamblers want more than anyone else. They are just greedy.'

Eventually I asked Frank the same question. 'Well, I've read crap about gamblers being sick or they really want to lose and all that. Other people get off on fishing or trainspotting and some of 'em get compulsive about their own special thing. But nobody makes a big number of it. Gamblers gamble because gambling is their world. They play up their dough on the tables or at the track because that's how you are a gambler, how you mix with gamblers and have interesting stories to tell each other. It's as simple as that.' □

ISRAEL

Felicia Langer's war

FELICIA LANGER is the Jewish lawyer Israelis love to hate. She defends Arabs in Israeli military courts. Two of her clients, Arab mayors from the West Bank, recently went on hunger strike at the United Nations, protesting against their expulsion from the West Bank. Their battle has become a *cause célèbre* for Israel's judiciary and government. RIVKA FRIED visited the lawyer who gives Israel's leaders some of their greatest headaches.

INTERVIEWING Felicia Langer is a somewhat harried and desperate affair; her Jerusalem office is not unlike a chaotic Arab market at peak hours. Her desk was a mountain of files; Arabs in long galabiyahs shuffled in and out; phones screamed incessantly. As I waited I heard Mrs Langer bellowing down the wire in Hebrew at a member of the military government. She materialised briefly — a plump figure in a denim skirt and simple white blouse — and apologised in demure tones for the delay. Then back to the phone and the shrill harangue resumed. Her Palestinian assistant grinned broadly.

Felicia Langer first became acquainted with the Palestinian problem through Arab members of the Communist Party. In 1965 she passed the bar examinations at Hebrew University and began to practice law, defending mostly juvenile delinquents and demonstrators, both Jews and Arabs. She found her present calling with the outbreak of the Six Day War two years later.

'When the occupation started, I felt that this is a catastrophe for us; for my people and the other people . . . I understood that an era of oppression is coming.'

Today she believes the prophecy has been fulfilled with the Israeli 'iron fist' policy in the occupied territories. The expulsion of the mayors is one example, as well as the confinement of other West Bank leaders to their towns and the recent crackdown on Palestinian universities. The aim, she says, is 'a total oppression. Oppression of spirit, oppression of mind, of thought.'

Popperfoto

Felicia Langer

The two mayors are Fahd Kawasme of Hebron and Muhammad Milhelm of Halhoul. They were originally deported last May after the murder of six Jews in Hebron. Kawasme and Milhelm were accused of using inciting language that provoked the murders. The mayors were allowed back to appeal; last month the Israeli Supreme Court upheld the original deportation orders, but recommended that the two men should be allowed to stay for a probationary period.

It seemed as if a compromise had been achieved. The mayors, after all, had signed affidavits pledging to abide by the rules imposed by Israeli's military government on the West Bank, and declared that they had never propogated the destruction of the State of Israel.

The Israeli government, however, had other ideas. It went against its own Supreme Court and expelled the mayors again. The mayors flew to New York, and obtained a rare, unanimous ruling by the United Nations Security Council that Israel should allow them back. Israel refused, and the hunger strike began.

Israel's actions represent a defeat for Felicia Langer as much as for the two mayors. A blond, diminutive woman, she was the moving force behind the many months of petitions, military appeal tribunals and court hearings. She is a Jew, a Communist and, in the eyes of many Israelis, a traitor. 'All the time I am getting threats by telephone', she told me. 'I've had letters and now I'm getting telephone calls.' One such caller recently gave her 48 hours to leave the country.

FELICIA LANGER was born in Poland in 1929 but later moved to the Soviet Union, where she gravitated to the political left. In 1950 she immigrated to Israel, although she had

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no particular sentiments about the Jewish state.

'I was never a Zionist . . . But after coming here and becoming politically affiliated with communism, it was something which implanted me in this place. I started feeling Israel is my homeland, and my only one.' And the West Bank? 'No, I don't think that my homeland is in Hebron and Nablus.'

Despite considerable hostility and isolation from her compatriots, Felicia Langer regards herself as a political moderate. She is opposed to so-called rejectionists like Ibrahim Nasser, a Palestinian lawyer working just several doors away. He heads a group called the Progressive Nationalist Movement which broke away from the pro-Soviet Rakah Party two years ago and views itself as a challenge to the Communist Party.

Mr Nasser is a handsome, mild-mannered man; his message, however, is hard-hitting and unequivocal; any formula which does not include all of Palestine is invalid. 'The only solution is a secular state, not two states,' he said.

Felicia Langer disagrees. 'We have differences of opinion. I am fighting with the rejectionists, both inside Israel and outside. It is counter-productive here and counter-productive there (in the territories).'

A member of Rakah, Mrs Langer sees the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel as the only solution to the Middle East conflict. In the years since the 1967 War, she has defended thousands of Arabs charged with security offences.

She admits to differences with many of her clients, but maintains they are now more willing to compromise. 'I have clients in prison for whom the idea of a Palestinian state alongside Israel was a monstrous one. And now it isn't.' I pointed out that during my conversations on the West Bank I heard some opinions identical to those of Ibrahim Nasser. She shrugs; Felicia Langer's voice and expressions possess an incredible range, at times gently pensive, at others strident and harsh. 'There are rejectionist Muslims who are still holding this view . . . and I am arguing with them.'

MRS LANGER was in the centre of a public storm in September when, along with two members of the Israeli Parliament, she met the PLO leader Yasser Arafat — the man Israelis officially proclaim to be untouchable. The three were accused of 'treason' and 'maintaining contact with the enemy'; demands were voiced for drastic measures, including stripping the two MK's of their parliamentary immunity and putting them on trial. A furious crowd assaulted the group when they returned from Sofia, where the meeting had taken place. 'It was a very sad moment to be in Tel Aviv airport,' Felicia Langer said, 'and to hear the shouting.'

Of the encounter she says: 'I feel that it is only a symbol. And may be an opening.' But 'it was exciting, really exciting. Because you see I am a Jew, I am an Israeli, a survivor of the holocaust indirectly . . . I feel day by day ashamed of what I see in the occupied territories, as a Jew, as an Israeli. Therefore, when I am speaking to Arafat, and Arafat is seeing in me a representative of my people, but of the other face of my people . . . for me it is exciting.'

But she may have been grabbing at straws in her political assessment. 'Arafat didn't say a Palestianian state,' she concedes. 'But he also didn't say a secular state in old Palestine. And whoever has a musical ear can find the difference.' □

INDIA

Indira Gandhi's police state

This weekend India is marking the first anniversary of Indira Gandhi's re-election as Prime Minister. AMRIT WILSON, just returned from India, looks below the surface of 'the world's biggest democracy'.

IN ANDHRA PRADESH, Kerala and Tamil Nadu hundreds of peasants are being killed in 'encounters' with the police; Assam is engulfed in class warfare which is spilling over into racialism; in Nagaland and Mizoram the insurgents want secession; in Bihar 87 cases of people being blinded by the police are exposed; in Bengal hundreds are arrested and injured in demonstrations against price rises; in Maharashtra the farmers' agitations are gathering force; not a day passes when the police do not indulge in some gruesome rape or murder.

India is at breaking point. The atmosphere in towns is electric — tense with the anger and desperation of the people. The parliamentary 'socialists' of different shades are totally discredited — as irrelevant to the peasants and workers' struggles as the laws made by parliament are to the activities of the police. And if the eggshell of Indian democracy is cracking what is hatching out is a fully blown Latin-American-style police state.

Yet in the midst of this turmoil official India is still on show for Westerners. 'Poverty', as Mrs Gandhi tells them in her new coffee table book *Eternal India,* 'has not soured the Indian. It has chastened him'. In any case poverty may well be a thing of the past, because as Mrs Gandhi told her audience recently, the statisticians are wrong: 'children looked in better health, their eyes were brighter and they were better dressed'.

In fact 50 per cent of Indians live at subsistence level, and there are 2½ million bonded labourers who have to mortgage themselves and their families to money-lending farmers. And almost everything in the economy maintained by India's police state is controlled by the West or the Soviet Union. (About 70 per cent of the total corporate profit is reaped by foreign capital.) As for India's well-known import substitution policies (dictated by aid agencies like the World Bank) they have led not to self reliance but to greater dependence because Indian firms set up with Western collaboration name Western firms as sole suppliers of components. (In the case of firms set up with Soviet collaboration, their sole purpose is to sell goods cheaply to the USSR which resells them at world market prices.)

In rural areas, modern agricultural methods (recommended once again by Western agencies) are turning India into a vast consumer of fertilisers and agricultural machinery. Big landowners strengthened by foreign loans are pushing small farmers off the land into share cropping and day labour. This is not a case of aid or loans going through corruption to 'the wrong people'. As T. Nagi Reddy, the Andhra Pradesh revolutionary leader, explains in his book *India Mortgaged,* Western control, like colonialism requires the consolidation of power in the hands of big landowners.

This started off as British policy, but the landlords have lost little of their power since. They control the structure of the panchayats (local self-government) and are thus able to appropriate all government benefits issued in the name of socialism. In addition, as the local elite of neocolonialism, they receive foreign aid, loans and investments in return for providing a market for Western goods.

BUT WHAT REALLY hits anyone who can see is that this exploitation by the landlords is not being accepted passively. It is being bitterly fought. There are youth and peasant movements and democratic organisations working together often under the guidance of revolutionary communists. This very resistance and the resulting insecurity of the landlord class has led to a brutal repression being unleashed. According to Jagmohan Singh, President of Punjab's Association For Democratic Rights (ADR):

> During the emergency the police tasted unlimited power and in industrial towns and villages it is as though the emergency has gone on for ever. Student leaders and revolutionary communists have been murdered and their bodies mutilated. Poor and low-caste communities have been attacked by armed police.

In one case six months ago in the small town

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of Dabwali in Haryana State police constables raped a young woman, Sheela Devi. When her husband protested they murdered her. Shocked and angry the people of Dabwali poured out of their homes, shops were shut, there was virtual 'hartal' (total shutdown). Thousands of people gathered outside the police station to protest and demand an official enquiry into the rape and murder. Then without any warning the police started firing on the unarmed crowd. In 25 minutes 150 rounds were fired. Countless people were seriously hurt including passengers in passing buses. Later the police claimed they had fired in self-defence. Eventually a few police officers were suspended only to be reinstated within a few days by the Deputy Inspector General of Police for Haryana State.

In the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, repression is, if anything, more systematic. In Andhra Pradesh, which is one of India's poorest regions, the landlords own vast areas of land and are often related to all the important village functionaries including the police. Peasants, artisans and labourers can be forced to work for the landlord without payment and disputes between the landlord and the peasants are settled with the imposition of a fine by the landlord.

Behind all this is not just traditional feudalism but police power of the modern state, for these practices are being enforced not on a passive peasantry but on people with a history of revolutionary struggle. Andhra Pradesh saw a communist-led armed revolt in 1948-1951 and guerrilla squads operating under Naxalite guidance throughout the seventies. These were ruthlessly suppressed. The last two or three years has seen the growth and consolidation of Ryotu Cooli Sanghams (RCS: Peasant Labour Associations) inspired and guided by Marxist Leninist parties. Their main demands have been an increase in wages, an end to feudal practices and the return of land illegally occupied by landlords (wholesale landgrabbing by big landlords is quite common).

Where demonstrations and public meetings have failed the RCSs have used 'social boycotts' and strikes in which the whole village has refused to cooperate with the landlord whether in his fields or in his home. The landlords have retaliated with violence using hired thugs and armed police.

In Ranaid village, field labourers went on strike bringing work to a complete standstill. The landlord responded with a night time raid in which eight peasant homes were totally destroyed and two peasants were killed. In the next few months the RCSs lay low in Ranaid, diverting their activities to neighbouring villages.

In response, more than 3000 peasants from neighbouring villages marched into Ranaid. The goondas of the landlord attacked this demonstration but the peasants captured the landlord, his police officer brother and two others and took them as hostages to the neighbouring village. There as a symbolic gesture they were forced to fell trees for fifteen minutes.

With the landlord in their custody the peasants forced the police to negotiate. The captives were released when the peasants' demands were agreed to. But the agreement was not kept. The police repression which followed this incident has been described in India's *Economic and Political Weekly:*

> The very next day . . . 1000 armed police in 25 vehicles raided Ranaid (and eleven neighbouring villages). A large number of peasants were dragged out of their fields and beaten indiscriminately. Hundreds of peasants were taken to Peddapalle and beaten up for ten days in unlawful custody. An entire belt of 35 villages reverberated with the sound of lathis and cries for three days. Finally cases have been filed against ten main accused who have been named and '800 others'.

THE POLICE OCCUPATION of Ranaid is only one example of the reign of terror inflicted in Andhra Pradesh for years. A legal weapon in this is the Suppression of Disturbances Act. This Act empowers any police officer from sub-inspector upwards to open fire or order opening fire 'or to otherwise use force even to the extent of causing death against any person . . . acting in contravention of any law or order in force.' It also prohibits assembly of five or more persons and brings death sentences for a number of offences. It is, as civil rights workers told me, the final license to murder on a massive scale.

In fact the police need no license to murder. In Andhra Pradesh alone, at least 274 people were killed between 1969 and 1979 in 'encounters' between 'Naxalites' and the police. Encounters are also common in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar and Punjab. Their true nature is revealed by the list of dead produced by Andhra's Organisation for the Protection of Democratic Rights, for example: 'Pidugu Veeraswamy (age 12) tortured and shot, Khammam 1971; Mrs Padmakka arrested and killed, Khammam Dec. 1974; Narayanrao arrested Hyderabad city October 1976 and tortured and killed but reportedly shot dead in an encounter in Warangal in December 1975.'

Meanwhile Mrs Gandhi, guided by the 'built-in clock in my mind' which tells her 'what to do and when to do', moves further towards dictatorship with plans of a change towards a 'Presidential system' and through the enactment of a series of repressive ordinances.

The latest among these, the National Security Ordinance, allows for imprisonment without trial. It is widely regarded as the old emergency's MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act) in another guise. But A. K. Ray, Marxist MP and trade union leader from the colliery centre of Dhanbad (who had been himself picked up under this ordinance — but subsequently released when he challenged his arrest), told me: 'The ordinance is not important. Preventative Detention is part of the system, there is nothing to be alarmed about. What is alarming is that power has lost its direction. In a feudal society there are some mutual obligations and some tolerance. But in India what we see is a vicious feudal form of dependent capitalism. Parliament is a parliament of rulers with a basic unity. They are there to rule by perpetuating the structure. Is it surprising that people have given up their trust in political parties? The demarcation between the parties is less and the people and the parties is more.' □

RIGHT of REPLY 1

How we drew the thin blue line

Last week the *NS* revealed the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure. WALTER MERRICKS, a member of the Commission, responds to the criticisms of Harriet Harman of the National Council for Civil Liberties.

THOSE USED TO accepting the view of the National Council for Civil Liberties on most police/legal matters will have been shocked and horrified by last week's article by Harriet Harman of NCCL on the report of the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure. After three years' work, has this important body, composed mainly of lay people, simply given in to the law-and-order lobby and cravenly accepted police demands for more power straight down the line?

The picture painted by last week's article is such a travesty of what the Commission actually proposes that, as a long-standing NCCL member, I must be forgiven for attempting to put things straight. NCCL, if they follow the advice of their legal officer, may be throwing away the chance to back major advances in civil liberties, and may simply ally themselves with those reactionary elements in the police who will undoubtedly have serious reservations about the increased safeguards for suspects' rights proposed, and who would prefer the vagueness of the status quo.

First, the Commission did not give in to police demands. Of the extensive and well-publicised shopping list presented by Sir David McNee (mass fingerprinting, detention of suspects for 72 hours, power to arrest witnesses, abolition of the right to silence, general warrants to search for evidence, retention of police control over prosecutions), all have been decisively rejected. On the other hand, many NCCL submissions have been adopted — for instance on search, seizure and surveillance their recommendations have been accepted virtually without exception.

Naturally some police powers to investigate crime must remain. But has the Commission in reality proposed major extensions? Take arrest, where police powers were said to have been widened to include all imprisonable offences, when at the moment the general rule is that arrest without warrant is limited to

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crimes carrying a five year jail term. In fact there is a massive list of over 100 exceptions to the general rule — separate powers of arrest for more minor, but nonetheless quite important, offences; but all this is piecemeal and omits (for historical reasons) some quite serious offences — for example indecent assault, illegal eviction, and incitement to racial hatred. The Commission's proposal is simply to put on a proper basis the general power of arrest — after all it is quite logical that if an offence is serious enough for you to be sent to prison for it, the police should be able to use arrest to apprehend you for it.

But the offences that can carry five years also include some very minor ones — theft of tiny amounts, damage to minor items. So the Commission seeks to limit the actual use of arrest to cases where the police *need* to use it — where they don't, people should be given summonses rather than be dragged to the police station and subjected to the inevitable indignity and loss of liberty.

THE AIM IS both to cut down the use of arrest, and also to limit the time spent in custody by those who are arrested. The present law is ill-defined and nearly all the submissions to the Commission requested clarification. Roughly speaking, for non-serious offences (and seriousness is not currently defined) you should be charged and brought to court within 24 hours; for 'serious' offences, you should be charged and taken to court 'as soon as practicable' (not defined, but can be up to a week).

First the Commission proposes that serious offences be defined (and offers a suggested definition), and then insists that there be a review after six hours to see if detention is still necessary (reasons to be recorded, unjustified detention to be unlawful). Those arrested for serious offences who had not been charged after 24 hours would have to be brought to court (sitting in private which is surely right for people who have not been charged) or, if no court were sitting, would have to be visited by a solicitor.

So the rules are to be clarified, and the vast majority of people who are suspected of ordinary offences cannot be threatened with two or three day detention which may be needed, but should be reserved for those involved in big-time crime. Of course if the rules are clarified, it will be clearer whether people are illegally held or not, and if they are legally held then habeas corpus writs will not be needed.

Yet these proposals were represented as a restriction on habeas corpus and a greater freedom for the police to arrest and detain! Is it really fair to suggest, as Harriet Harman does, that they would institutionalise the sort of powers contained in the Prevention of Terrorism legislation (that provides week-long detentions on the say-so of the Home Secretary, no provision for court appearances or visits by lawyers)?

As far as the right to legal advice is concerned, the Commission is said to have 'nominally' extended this. At the moment the police can refuse access to a lawyer if they think it might unreasonably delay or hinder the process of investigation. This 'nominal' extension in fact amounts to a wholesale removal of the power of the police to refuse access for the vast majority of those arrested. For them the right to see a lawyer would be absolute — it could only be withheld from those suspected of 'serious' offences, and then only in specified circumstances and for reasons which would have to be recorded. And of course the delay cannot last longer than 24 hours since anyone held this long who has not been charged will either doubtless see a lawyer at court or will have to be visited by a lawyer. Do these proposals amount to an advance or to a set-back for the cause of civil liberty?

ON INTERROGATION the Commission suggests the replacement of the Judges Rules (made by the judiciary) and the Administrative Directions to the police (made by the executive) by a code of practice to regulate police interviewing to be laid down by Parliament. This proposal is attacked as vague, when in fact the Report spells out considerable content for the Code (a 16-strong Commission is hardly in a position to undertake detailed drafting): limtied length for interviews; no interviewing of persons under the influence of drugs or drink or who have recently awoken or who have been incommunicado beyond specified periods; not more than a specified number of officers to be present; etc, etc. These provisions, it should be noted, represent a considerable advance on the present rules and directions which are not law and do not contain such restrictions.

But Harriet Harman's sharpest words are reserved for the sanctions to result if provisions of the code are not complied with. To her disappointment the Commission does not recommend that resulting evidence should automatically be excluded by the judge from being given to the jury. Instead he is to warn them of the unreliability of such evidence, directing them to look for other evidence of guilt before convicting, but then allowing them to assess it for themselves. Only where the evidence results from inhuman or degrading behaviour by the police should it be struck out altogether.

For not adopting an automatic exclusionary rule for breaches of the Code — and since it will be fairly detailed it would be possible for its provisions to be broken inadvertently rather than deliberately — the Commission is accused of cowardice. The NCCL view seems to be that the only effective way of deterring the police from breaking the law is by threatening them with the prospect of seeing guilty criminals released. But like all deterrence theories there is precious little evidence that it works.

And what of the experience in America where it is widely in force? The result is that the police become confused, demoralised, and somewhat devious; and interminably lengthy trials, punctuated by continual legal arguments about the admissability of evidence, often result in the technical acquittal of those who are transparently guilty. While such rules provide good mileage for defence lawyers, are they really what civil liberties are all about?

Among other advances proposed by the Commission I would cite: reasons to be recorded for any stop and search of the person; limitations on strip searching; fingerprinting no longer to be automatic police routine; the use of telephone tapping by the police to be brought under statutory control; improved notification of rights to suspects in custody; the tape-recording of the conclusions of all interrogations; and last but not least, the removal from the police of control over the conduct of prosecutions. Hardly the list you would expect from a Commission of cowards who have given in to the hard-liners.

Adherents of the law-and-order lobby will be staggered to learn that they are supposed to have won a major victory and will certainly not take that view. Thoughtful police officers — and there are many — will reflect that increased accountability will help to allay genuine public unease without hampering them in the real work the public expects them to do. Civil libertarians should read the report in order to appreciate the extent of the gains on offer, and campaigners in the field should set about pressing what may well be a reluctant Home Office for a speedy implementation of the main proposals. □

The Dissenter

Jack Jones, who was one of Walter Merricks' colleagues on the Royal Commission, has issued this week a press statement highly critical of many of the recommendations Merricks defends. We hope — perhaps naively — that the respectable press will report this as assiduously as they followed up the *New Statesman's* disclosure last week of the Report's contents. In the next issue, we shall give our own views on the proposed extensions of police power.

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RIGHT of REPLY 2

Sense and sensibility

BRUCE PAGE replies to Anna Coote's allegations of sexism at Great Turnstile.

THAT WOMEN in our society are unfairly treated is something numerous men accept. Less often do they accept the existence of real conflicts of interest between the sexes: for this implies that in order to end the oppression of women, it will be necessary to deprive men of some of their powers and privileges.

One cannot say anything worthwhile about sexual politics unless the central facts of oppression and conflict are acknowledged. Only against this background is it possible to comprehend why the argument assumes such an intractable form. When one class has exploited another for generations, then it becomes hard for individuals drawn from either side to accept each other's rationality. The same applies to sexual conflicts.

Often to men — even, sometimes to women — the rhetoric of feminism seems deliberately anti-rational. There's a celebrated formulation of Germaine Greer's which says that logic is no more relevant in sexual politics than the Queensberry Rules in a pub brawl.

One sees the intended point: elegant reason has never been the real cement in the structure of male supremacism. But, as a rule of praxis, it may have the sad effect of encouraging the idea that an experienced boxer will generally be an easy opponent in a freehand battle. (Not so.)

If you're one of the men who wish to see feminism make progress, in spite of the losses this will impose on our sex as a whole, then there's no use in applauding irrationalism. But in order to have even a slender hope of being heard on the point, it's vital to begin with the admission that something dressed up as 'rationalism' has been one of man's chief propaganda weapons in the ancient war of subjugation against women. The old anatomists who descanted upon the inferior volume of the female brain were in the same line of business as the clowns who assert today that menstrual instability should debar women from flying airliners. If there are toxic fumes around, it wasn't the women who lobbed the first canister.

ANNA COOTE's argument, relying partly on Dale Spender*, says that language today is male-dominated because of its grammatical structure and that men use language to dominate women — chiefly by talking far more. Spender's researches are backed up by a spot of fieldwork in the *NS* office, where Anna logged an editorial conference, and found that most speech was male.

Beyond this, she says that journalism is a male invention — especially the *New Statesman* brand — and that if invented by women it would be, and will be, different. The difference can't yet be stated, but what's implied is that there would be more by way of nuance, subtlety and individual experience.

Let's wash our own grubby linen first. The difference between the men and the women on the editorial staff is that the men, collectively, have a much wider and more active experience of journalism. Therefore, operationally, they have more to say. This, of course, isn't due to greater inborn ability: it's due to the disgraceful fact that the existing structure of journalism offers *routinely* to men a breadth of experience which it offers only *exceptionally* to women.

In short: whatever happens in the world generally, and in Dale Spender's research, I claim that participation-level in the *NS* is chiefly influenced by relative level of professional expertise. The *NS* tries consciously to resist the external biases which make expertise more available to men. But we shan't be able to make a decisive impact on that problem until our small organisation reaches a stage of development when it can generate from within its own resources a larger part of the professional experience of its staff. (Or: train its own staff.)

THE GRAMMAR of sexuality, in English at least, is a point more troublesome than significant. Generally, no great ingenuity is required to write sentences which either are gender-free, or are specific to appropriate gender.

What is more serious is the suggestion — underlying Anna's argument, and much other feminist writing — that there is a specifically female class of mental function: corollary, that journalism (for instance) done by women, as a collectivity, would be different from journalism done by men as a collectivity. This is not only wrong, but dangerous, for it admits the core of the supremacists' case, which alleges that women, just as women, are quite different from men.

I'm quite sure that journalism, or any other trade, will be done much better if it's done by men and women together in conditions of genuine equality. But not because there's a male way of being a good journalist, as against a female one. It will be because of a huge increase in the amount of talent and energy available.

Journalism is a particular case of a general problem: which is that since prehistory the human race, because of its male-determined inability to be other than intermittently civilised about its internal sexual conflicts, has been trying to get by on about half of its potential survival equipment. Dimly, at almost the eleventh hour. The point begins to be seen.

Sexual polarity, of course, provides for most of us the central emotional experience of our lives. But one of the worst legacies of supremacism is that it prevents so many people making the further and miraculous discovery that this one profound axis of difference leaves almost every other important distinction of human personality quite unpredictable — courage, musicality, wit, or frivolity. Heterosexual love survives, against all the odds, precisely because of this point: that whatever human qualities one finds attractive, consciously or otherwise, they are as likely to be found in the opposite sex as they will be in one's own.

The point can be expressed sociologically. Inequities of sex, class and race affect profoundly the distribution of life-chances between groups. But even amid the distortions of our present society, they predict nothing significant about the qualities of particular people, for the variations between individuals are far more dramatic than the differences between aggregates. There are differences between Henry Fielding and Jane Austen — some of which relate to the different life-experiences of a clergyman's daughter and a criminal magistrate. But the important thing about them is that both possessed transcendent creative powers, so that the trajectory of English literature cannot be imagined without either of them. The same is not true of agreeable minor writers like the man Leigh Hunt or the woman Emily Eden (for all that she's undervalued).

This is the same principle of proportion which Lenin stated in his observation that the first genuine *mouzhik* in Russian literature was created by the aristocrat Tolstoy. It is made in reverse by the procession of dummies who've been unable to credit that Shakespeare wasn't an Oxbridge chap.

TWO DIFFERENT errors follow from missing this point. One is made by the successful, anti-feminist woman who says: 'I have succeeded in a man's world. Why should not others?' The other is the error of false aggregation, which suggests that because all women who achieve something in the world face more difficulties than all men who achieve something, *therefore* the exceptional woman resembles other women more than she resembles exceptional men (or exceptional homosexuals).

In immediate operational terms, the first error is the more dangerous, because it suggests that fair treatment for individuals is an alternative to fair treatment for a class. Precisely because individual capacity transcends experience, it is *only* possible to assist women — or blacks, or workers — collectively. (If people are wholly exceptional, it's something of an impertinence for society to imagine that its assistance is particularly relevant.)

But the second error reinforces the first. Anna's article gives some clues to the differences which are proposed between the 'male' and the 'female' mental (or journalistic) mode: male is abstract, collective, numerate, rigorous and (by implication) unsubtle; female is particular, individual, descriptive, and (by implication) subtle. The dichotomy is a false one, based on nothing more than the ancient male discovery that effective power in the real world — which is, at some levels, a fairly intransigent physical system — depends upon skills of numeracy and abstraction as well as skills of literacy. It is only necessary to shut women out from one of these factitious categories in order to 'prove' that their minds are quite different.

From male supremacists, one can expect nothing else: what other rhetorical cards have they got to play? But for feminists to collaborate in the pretence risks the shipwreck of their whole enterprise, upon whose success the future of our society depends. □

*Man Made Language, Routledge & Kegan Paul, £4.95.

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Diary

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

in Athens

■It sounds odd, even absurd, to say 'Welcome to Europe' when greeting a Greek friend. One has that feeling of incongruity which is so fatal to a pompous declaration. Yet European they have become, if reports may be believed. I thought Roy Jenkins would be the first to say how Greece was the cradle of civilisation, and I was not disappointed. But in spite of the clichés, and notwithstanding the piety, there is an indelible sense that Greece has done the right thing. For so long a vassal state on the southern fringes, and for so long ruled by local bullies who wanted an isolated 'Greece for Christian Greeks', the country has now acquired a weight it did not possess before. Opinion polls show a steady majority in favour among voters of all parties. The French and the British have already made whining noises about the size of the Greek agricultural subsidy — always a good sign.

Mr Kannallopoulos, the farming minister, made a speech full of Homeric references to his country, and startled the torpor of the EEC bureaucrats. All this is to the good. At the inaugural ceremony on Monday, which was boycotted by most of the opposition parties on the grounds that it celebrated the government too much, there were still prominent leftist and resistance figures like Ilias Iliou to be spotted in the crowd. And, even among the socialists and communists who stayed away, there was a deep split between pro-Market and anti-Market factions.

■'Socialist', by the way, is one of the few modern political terms which does not come from any Greek root. Bearing this structural deformity in mind, it is surprising how popular the word has become here. There is the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement, the Party of Democratic Socialism, the Socialist Initiative, a choice of two communist parties (divided on Moscow lines and on the EEC) and many smaller splinter factions. The centrist parties all like to call themselves social democratic, and even the ruling party 'New Democracy' defines its ideology as mild socialism and points proudly to its record of nationalisation. All this makes for a slightly uncongenial unanimity, like the post-1848 parties in Europe who all had to have revolutionary names.

Appearance can be deceptive, but the seven years of fascism at least taught the voters that oligarchy is conservatism writ large. The small and venomous parties which still celebrate the junta and the monarchy are doing their best to keep this proposition alive — and of course they hate the idea of Europe.

■Greece is not so decided about its other international alliance. In fact, it would be safe to say that almost nobody really trusts NATO. This week has been dominated by a row between Andreas Papandreou and the government concerning the terms on which Greece rejoined the military wing. It is a firm belief in opposition circles that certain guarantees were given to the new junta in Turkey — especially guarantees about the demilitarisation of the bordering Aegean Islands. No hard evidence exists to support this view, but there is a great suspicion that Reagan's White House will favour the Turkish generals and abandon Cyprus to its fate. There was a time when Washington patronised dictatorship in Athens because the famous Sixth Fleet needed a home port. What could be more ironic than a tame dictatorship in Turkey, designed to safeguard the Bosphorous?

The reappearance of Henry Kissinger in the region has done nothing to calm such speculation, and nor has the emergence of General Alexander Haig, well known for his pro-Turkish and anti-Cypriot opinions. Lawrence Stern reported, shortly before his death, the predominant State Department view. 'The Greeks are the French, and the Turks are the Germans — we like the French better but we need the Germans more.' Greeks hesitated about rejoining NATO because of Haig's conditions. From their point of view he could not have come at a worse time. At least, as Bertrand Russell used to say, the Trojan War was the only just war because it was fought on behalf of beauty.

■In the days of antiquity, the 'halcyon days' were the first week of the new year, and so called for their exceptional sweetness and light. This week has been no betrayal of that tradition.

The hills and crags around Delphi are topped with snow, but the sky is very blue and the trees are very green, and the American Express and Diners Club season is still some time away. In the distance, one little finger of the Gulf of Corinth can be seen, amazingly clear and bright and (for the incurably romantic) perhaps the spot where the dolphin landed Apollo from the island of Delos and thus gave Delphi its name. I spilled a number of alcoholic libations to Apollo in and around the town, and bethought me of the fine words of Sir Kenneth Dover in his book *The Greeks:*

> Apollo was eternally youthful, ineffably beautiful and invincibly strong: perfectly accomplished in all the arts and sciences, endowed with the foreknowledge that is denied to mankind, effortlessly able to destroy his enemies and protect his friends. He had a lot of girls, and therefore a lot of sons, but no wife. In short he was what every young male Greek would like to be.

Back in Athens, the truth of that last proposition can be literally felt. There seems to be some compulsion or perhaps some agreement, among all the young male Greeks. Here is the drill. You hang about in a pack and swap more cigarettes than are good for you. You then judge the height and weight, not of the girls but of their male escorts. Depending on the outcome of your estimate, you goose and chivvy the girl while making the chap feel a fool. I am fortunate in having a Cypriot fiancée much taller, prettier and stronger than myself, so I have leisure to observe other foreigners getting the business, and can sometimes offer sapient advice. One thing — don't resort to the untranslatable word which labels the offender a sodomite. For some reason, that is a fighting term in this man's town.

■When I first visited Athens, there were tanks in the square where I am writing, and friends of mine had bullet wounds which they would not dare take to the hospital. It was the terrible autumn of 1973, when the junta of Papadopoulos had given way by force to the crazed and even more sadistic junta of Brigadier Ioannides. The students of Athens had made a marvellous rebellion, and within a year the Cyprus catastrophe had bought Greece a hard-earned freedom. Today, the citizenry do not look away at the sight of a military uniform, and all officers are anxious to proclaim their loyalty to constitutional methods. The worst, but not the whole, of the old gang are safe behind bars. Yet, until this week, there was a television station run by the armed forces. Its propaganda line was even more crudely one-party than the regular network, but it attracted many viewers because of its efficient and reliable programming. But the Common Market agreement forbids such flagrant politicisation of the armed forces, and officially at least the broadcasts are not military any more. Now all the country needs is a press and television with an atom of taste, and a particle of courage when it comes to criticising the ruling party.

■There is another aspect of the junta's heritage which it will not be so easy to neutralise. Looking at the clear atmosphere above the snows of Mount Parnassus (and ignoring the cosmopolitan Greeks who are trying to turn it into a ski resort) I realised that my eyes were no longer smarting. A cloud of rank pollution hangs over central Athens, poisoning the lungs, irritating the senses and decomposing the stone of the Acropolis.

This is, in every sense, a hangover from the time when the dictatorship lifted all kinds of regulation on building, traffic, and the burning of fuel. Add it to the gross overpopulation of Athens and Attica — something which the regional fund of the Common Market must try to discourage — and you have a pretty desolate and blighted recipe. Like a lot of people in 'picturesque' poor countries, the Greeks are impatient with being mendicant and want their own share of the good life. Wish them well, especially the 30 per cent or so who work in very arduous and exacting conditions on the land. But it will be a shame if they follow our bad example and consume all the best of their scenery and character. In the meantime, coughing one's way through Constitution Square and fending off the lubricious teenagers, one can at least use the term 'fascist miasma' in its proper and literal sense for a change.

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Medina borough councillor Mr J. Manners has been accused of wanting to turn Newport into a 'Las Vegas'. He supported a move to install several amusement machines in a cafe, Mr D's Diner, in the High Street, saying an arcade was needed because many people thought Newport 'a dead place'. — *Isle of Wight Mercury* (C.A.Tindall)

☐ East Hampshire Council is so proud of its vandal-proof public toilets at Bordon that it has included a picture of the building in its 1981 calendar. — *Basildon Evening Echo* (David Ealey)

☐ Councillor Gale Pitt accused them all of being reactionary. She said the qualities needed to play Space Invaders were qualities necessary for young people living today. — *Redbridge Guardian* (Ray Weekes)

☐ Around 4.30 is tea-messing, when boys are allowed to take tea with friends in their studies. It's really the time when most Etonians supplement the school food. A van from Harrods calls about once a week delivering stuff. — *Sunday Times Magazine* (M.D.Fry)

☐ Britain's weathermen cannot forecast the rest of the winter because of government spending cuts. — *Daily Mail* (A.Heggie)

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FIRST PERSON

Arthur Marshall

Of good cheer

IN RESPONSE to many kind enquiries, may I say that Christmas at Appleton passed off with its customary éclat and élan (much as one disapproves of the entire frog nation, their language does occasionally prove quite useful for adding a flowery *je ne sais quoi* to a phrase), with exchanges of geriatric gifts — a hot-water-bottle here, a pair of hand-knitted mittens there —and the Bultitudes' cheerfully indiscriminate and blanket hospitality ('Crash on up any time for a noggin') warming and delighting everybody. It is clear that Bunty's new hair arrangement (a sort of golden mini-Tower of Pisa embellished with diamanté combs) will be quite a little talking-point in the village for some time to come. Even Miss Entwhistle, herself a pioneer and always one to welcome either a sartorial or corporal novelty in others, was visibly taken aback, though Giles was of course ('Doesn't the old girl look a treat!') his usual loyal self. Bultitude champagne flowed throughout the season (Canon and Mrs Mountjoy were seen each to lower three glasses and to do full justice to the cocktail-stick-skewered chipolatas) and no two kinder persons than the Colonel and his consort have ever lived. So who minds the occasional shrieks of 'Bottoms up, chaps!' and 'Cheery-bung!' and lavatory doors labelled HERE IT IS.

We at gracious 'Myrtlebank' were, one does so hope, in no way niggardly or lagging behind in the way of friendly outgoings, though we found ourselves rather caught on the hop (no mince-pies ready and no hot drinks) by the arrival, a day earlier than usual, of the church carol-singers, twenty strong and complete with lanterns and pink cheeks and a tuneful descant for the final verse of 'O come, all ye faithful'. However, a rustling bank-note of relatively handsome dimensions cheered everybody up and they exited from the garden on a wave of bonhomie and good-will.

You'll probably want to know about our Christmas lunch (at this time of year, few of the elderly venture forth in the chill night air). There were seven *couverts*, and when I tell you, and in all honesty, that the average age of those present was 78 and that I was the youngest but one, you will see how defiantly game we all are down here. My Cousin Madge, now nudging 90, made a resplendant and distinguished figure upon my right and commented favourably upon my unusual table decoration — sprigs of witch-hazel and yellow jasmine, both currently in full flower, combined with that lightish green holly with yellow-rimmed leaves, the three concomitants forming really quite a pleasing and happy ensemble: do feel free to copy it. Although no formal Grace was said before we ate, the more thoughtful among us offered up a silent and heartfelt word of thanks, not to the Almighty (pretty slack work all round in 1980 I must say, and why can't He do something about those poor hostages?) but to Messrs Marks & Spencer, to whom we owed, though not in a financial sense, the 9lb turkey, the spuds, the sprouts, the sausages, the bacon rolls and, when it came, the Christmas pudding, all of them purchased in a pre-Christmas press of humanity which, although one risked being trampled underfoot, greatly cheered those of us who chance to be share-holders.

Opinions about the cooking of poultry differ, and those who tell you that 1¼ hours is sufficient roasting-time for a medium-sized chicken are talking through their hats, but our turkey responded nobly and admirably to three hours starting, breast down, at 375 whatever they are, with the heat very gradually reduced and the bird, now right side up, moving, like some great theatre star on the skids, ever lower down the oven and landing up on the bottom where it 'rested' for a space, encircled with roast potatoes and sausages and the very picture of tender deliciousness.

Opinions about menus differ too and in my view it is inadvisable to have anything at all before the turkey, a bucket of soup or some savoury and cheesy fish thing being quite unnecessary and ruining everybody's full appreciation of the main *plat*. Although I know that electrical carving-knives exist, they will only enter the stately saloons of 'Myrtlebank' over a largish dead body, my own, for carving is such an agreeable and human task and a buzzing, whirring machine should have no part in it. I myself carve with the small-toothed side of a serrated bread-knife (no risk of tearing the flesh) and I noticed no dissatisfactions or glum faces. The Christmas pudding, steamed for four hours, was perfection, with mince-pies and Devonshire cream completing what some were kind enough to refer to, though not in those precise terms, as a gourmet's dream, a view with which I cannot honestly concur for both the bread sauce and the turkey stuffing were from a packet, admirable though the results were, and Mrs Beeton, not to speak of my mother and my two grandmothers, would have had fifty fits, one or other of the latter possibly swooning dead away. But oh my goodness, the convenience of a packet, eh what?

You are probably anxiously wondering what was offered in the way of liquid refreshment and here taste and refinement went hand in hand. There were three different kinds of sherry, dry, less dry, and not at all dry. There were assorted spirits, for those who find that they absolutely must. My Cousin Madge's internal arrangements require her to drink white wine rather than red, but with our lunch the rest of us drank a claret that boldly announced itself on the bottle as being CLARET, adding that it was 'famed for its elegance' and the 'traditional accompaniment to game and roasts'. It was shipped and bottled by a firm established since 1769 and in the entirely reputable area of London called St James's, and any firm that has remained for over two hundred years in SW1 is quite all right with me. And those who have by now become revolted by this recital of what to many may seem greed and gluttony can cheer up on receiving the assurance that such fare is, in 'Myrtlebank', purely seasonal and that, when the final devilled turkey leg has gone down the red lane, we shall go back to our regular and humble round of kippers and stews and toad-in-the-hole. How good, incidentally, mashed swedes are with the last named, and here's a tip. After mashing them with a sprinkling of salt, toss in a generous knob of butter, two teaspoons of caster sugar and the top of the milk. Mix well, re-heat, and an added succulence will be yours.

Which leads me, by one of those natural transitions that come so easily to some of us, to a, for me, happy journalistic moment of some years ago. I was invited to review, for a certain Sunday newspaper, the book in which Cecil Beaton told, and a little tactlessly some felt, of his friendly relationship with Greta Garbo — the meetings, the letters, the excited telephonings, the heights, the depths, the outings, the poutings, the broody moods, and so forth. Though ever courteous and gentlemanly, he carried on in a manner which our racy Edwardian forebears used to refer to as 'mashing'. Of the verb 'to mash', the dictionary gives 'to seek to fascinate somebody of the other sex', which indeed Sir Cecil tirelessly did, though to what purpose and end and with what result never became crystal clear. Snaps of Garbo decorated the book and were the customary ones of her, occasionally happily smiling but more often than not steeped in gloom and visually bearing out that astonishing statistic that Sweden, a country in which nothing of the smallest interest has ever occurred and which miraculously managed to stay out of the war, has the world's highest suicide rate.

Asked down the telephone to supply a heading for my review of the book, I did not hesitate. Witty as ever, and quick as a flash, I proudly suggested 'The Mashed Swede' and awaited the contented chuckles. They did not come. Incomprehension reigned. I explained 'to mash'. I explained that Miss Garbo was Swedish. Increasing comprehension was followed by hostility. Nobody would understand the fun. Too far-fetched for 'our readership'. Something simpler was needed, etc etc. So my jolly joke was turned down in favour of some milk-and-water title that I have forgotten. But at least I've managed to get it off my chest now.

Roger Woddis

Jack the Lad

'All the dying want is a bit of TLC (tender loving care).' — Squadron Leader Jack Curry, civil defence organiser at the Home Defence College, Easingwold.

'If ever the balloon goes up
And bits of flesh float down,
We'll still preserve an upper lip,'
Said Jack, the College clown.

'D-Day may seem a dim idea,
And war sound rather tame,
But vomiting and diarrhoea
Add interest to the game.'

'The living may be oozing pus,
And you can call me mad —
But that goes for the rest of us,'
Said laughing Jack the Lad.

'All the dying really want
Is a bit of TLC;
And when their eyes begin to melt,
They'll look to chaps like me.'

The treatment when the blood turns black
Is tender loving care,
Though what is left of jolly Jack
Is neither here nor there.

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LETTERS

What went wrong at The Times

From Jacob Ecclestone, Father of The Times *NUJ Chapel*

Innis MacBeath's otherwise interesting analysis of what has gone wrong at *The Times* under Lord Thomson and William Rees-Mogg (*NS* 19/26 December) was flawed by two silly remarks:

1. Referring to the gap between management's 18 per cent pay offer and the journalists' insistence on the 21 per cent recommended by the arbitrator — the cause of our strike — he says: 'apparently the idea of a staged settlement occurred to no-one in time to avert a walk-out.'

Mr MacBeath should not so pompously assume that the policies of appeasement he developed while father of the NUJ chapel at *The Times* have been continued. Of course staging occurred to the negotiators. We proposed such a solution at ACAS on 21 August and again on 22 August, a few hours before the strike started. Foolishly, management once again misread the true situation and would give no firm commitment to staging.

We went on strike, stopped the paper for a week, and got the commitment from management we would have accepted from the outset. Who really was to blame for such an unnecessary stoppage?

2. Innis MacBeath says I have 'specialised in being a unionist, accepting demotion in order to find sufficient time (for union work)'.

This is indeed strange. I joined *The Times* in 1962. Not until 1975 — 13 years later — did I play any active role in the union, and only then out of frustration. If I were indeed a union 'specialist', I was inordinately patient. Nor was I aware that I had been 'demoted' — but that is a subjective matter and from MacBeath's lofty pinnacle that may appear the case. Appearances are deceptive.

New Printing House Square, London WC1

Parliament of Fools

From Monica Ferman

Jack Straw's 'reply' (*NS* 2 January) to my report on the Housing Bill's Standing Committee advocates a valuable reform which would give additional powers to such Committees. The price to be paid — delaying the progress of legislation — could even be worthwhile. The Housing Act was scrambled on to the Statute Book in such chaos that, in places, it doesn't manage to say what the government meant. I am informed that in one Part of this Act alone there are eight admitted errors, including a mistaken repeal of a clause in previous legislation. It is, in John Tilley's words, 'not a landlords' charter, nor a tenants' charter, but a lawyers' charter.'

The availability to the whole Committee of notes on the clauses would certainly have helped. They were requested by the opposition many times and steadfastly refused.

But I think Jack Straw overrates the committee's influence on government utterances about the sale of council houses. It was the Select Committee on the Environment, sitting just along the corridor, which produced damning evidence on that subject for their First Report, published shortly before the Act. Heseltine, appearing before them, provided 'an object lesson in how to avoid answering questions' (I quote a Member of that Committee). The muting of trumpets began at that point. If only we could have had a merger!

London, NW6

I'M FROM THE NEW STATESMAN - WAS THAT INFELICITOUS TECHNICAL INFRINGEMENT NECESSARY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CROSS RHYTHMS OF THE GAME?

On the return of sport

From Brian Hill

I enjoyed John McVicar's sports page (*NS* 2 January) as a relaxing idyll on the pitch. However, it does smack of a socialist intellectual's return to the bosom of the working class via the archetypal interests of football, beer-drinking, and so on. I hope this sports column will not merely be a gesture to the probably non-existent working-class base of the *New Statesman*, counterpointing the chess column.

This sports column also featured some rather obvious political point-making (anti-racism, reference to Afghanistan). I hope McVicar will abandon this and join the Arts writers in producing a wider view of life rather than overt politics. I wish him well.

156 Beaumont Road, Bournville, Birmingham

Spook Erection and gypsies

From Bill Forrester, Gypsy Liaison Officer, Essex County Council

Only recently has my attention been drawn to your disturbing article 'Spook Erection and the gypsies' (*NS* 10 October). If it is true that local authorities, who are public bodies, have been employing people of any description to carry out physical evictions of gypsy families and their caravans, without getting court orders first, then it is a state of affairs which should be brought very urgently to the attention of the local authority associations, the Gypsy Sites Branch of the Department of the Environment, and the unions, whose very creditable action in refusing to participate in such activities is effectively nullified by the employment of substitute labour.

There is obviously a difficulty in getting reliable, if possible corroborated, information on such practices. It is, in my experience, a sad fact of life that gypsy families are all too used to being shifted on by fair means or foul, and some families are very little surprised by the sorts of eviction tactics which most right-thinking members of the settled population would regard as totally unacceptable. The fact that the gypsy families are unsurprised, however, is no reason why such practices should continue.

As far as I am aware it is certainly not the practice of District Councils within this County to use any such methods. As far as this County authority, and any other county Authority, is concerned, we have a duty to provide sites for gypsy families 'residing in or resorting to our area' and eviction, or attempted eviction of families within our County would run totally counter to that basic legal duty, and the local policies which have been established in the light of that duty.

I would hope that publicity and pressure will be brought to bear upon those Authorities who are pursuing any vindictive and/or extra-legal methods to rid themselves of their gypsies, by those public authorities who are facing up to their legal responsibilities and duties properly. After all, any 'success' achieved by a county with a negative, expulsive approach is a new influx of gypsy families and caravans into the adjoining area.

Social Services Dept, Kensal House, 77 Springfield Road, Chelmsford

From Cllr E. H. Morris, Chairman, Environmental Health, Cleansing & Transport Committee, Leeds City Council

My attention has been drawn to the article which appeared in the edition of *New Statesman* (10/10/80) regarding the activities of a firm called Spook Erection. The name of Leeds City Council also appeared in that article and I feel obliged to write to you to repudiate the inference that this Council indulges in the kind of activities described.

1. Leeds City Council has never employed Spook Erection or any other private company to evict gypsies.
2. This Council has never evicted gypsies indiscriminately. It is the policy only to evict when substantiated complaints are received — and then only from Council-owned land. There is no intention of using outside agencies for eviction purposes.
3. The advertisement for staff referred to in the article actually appeared in March 1977 and is not, as is implied, current. This took place after a substantial increase in the number of gypsies trespassing on Council land and a consequent rise in the number of complaints received about their behaviour and activities. As I have already stated, action is only taken when substantiated complaints are received. It is, however, a sad but true fact that complaints about gypsies invariably are justified — and the Council must consider its responsibilities to those people subjected to the gypsies' behaviour.
4. Although it has been found necessary on occasions to tow caravans from Council land, physical force or violence has never been used by my officers, although it has been used against them; and, referring again to the advertisement, I am sure you will agree that it is only sensible to recruit people who are physically capable of undertaking such labour and withstanding abuse, both physical and oral.
5. The statement in the opening paragraph of the article that a Court Order is required to evict gypsies from unauthorised sites, is wrong. It is the right of any landowner to eject trespassers, and, however certain people might attempt to complicate and confuse the issue, these people are trespassers.

I think it is unfortunate that you felt compelled to publish this item without reference to all the bodies referred to in it. Had you made such reference, the article, apart from then being accurate, would have been a balanced and much more valuable report than it unfortunately is.

Civic Hall, Leeds 1

A socialist transport policy

From Christopher Harvie, Professor of British Studies, Universität Tubingen

Dick Jones (Letters 2 January) asks why a socialist transport policy has not been formulated. Besides the policy options at stake, and the various arguments over them, he must take one factor into account. The railway trade unions have scarcely a quarter of a million members, the Transport and General Workers' Union has over two million, substantially drawn from road haulage and the motor industry. Despite ritual invocations of 'a coordinated transport system' the TGWU's policy is that of the British Road Federation — as witness its recent evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee. In my years as *Tribune's* transport correspondent I had to spend much of my time countering the TGWU's pro-road propaganda. Doubtless the union feels it has to support the interests of its members — although its busmen and inland waterway members have surely had a pretty raw deal — but I have never seen much connection between its policies and any socialist analysis of transport issues.

Wilhelmstrasse 50, 1400 Tubingen 1, W. Germany

NEXT WEEK: We invite readers to contribute to a discussion of Bruce Page's article 'God is sophisticated but not malicious' (*NS* 19/26 December). All letters by Tuesday, 13 January please.

A word from our sponsors . . .

The *New Statesman* frequently receives unsolicited manuscripts. We welcome them, read them and, when appropriate, consider them for publication. Unfortunately we cannot guarantee to return them unless a stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed. We ask aspiring contributors to bear this in mind when writing to us.

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Nigel Cross discusses the failure of capitalist, collectivist and 'green revolution' solutions to growing rural poverty in the Third World.

For a better tomorrow?

EACH YEAR sees a human death toll from starvation and malnutrition exceeding that of 150 Hiroshimas. Well-fed western radicals protest against future nuclear catastrophe — and survive. Eleven million children and four million adults from the world's poor countries die; diseases caused by malnutrition make the lives of many millions more both miserable and futile.

'Food first' is a slogan designed to tackle our apathy. At its most simple it is a collection of strategies designed to make human and economic investment in rural development the priority, in order to assist the poorest of the poor, some eight billion of them, to grow sufficient food for their needs. Everyone agrees that food for all is a basic human right. Since the World Food Conference of 1974 it has even been official UN policy. But for the first time in 20 years world food production has fallen for two consecutive years. There are some 80 million more mouths to feed this year alone. Oil price rises have raised the cost of fertilisers and mechanisation beyond the means of most Third World countries, who have to import food they can neither grow nor afford. The Gulf War is drying up OPEC aid funds. Other wars, coups and natural disasters add to the mass of refugees. The West listens to Scrooge not Brandt.

In the next few years the chances of a devastating famine are high, not because there is not enough food, but because there are no effective international agreements. As William Dando stresses in his *Geography of Famine:*

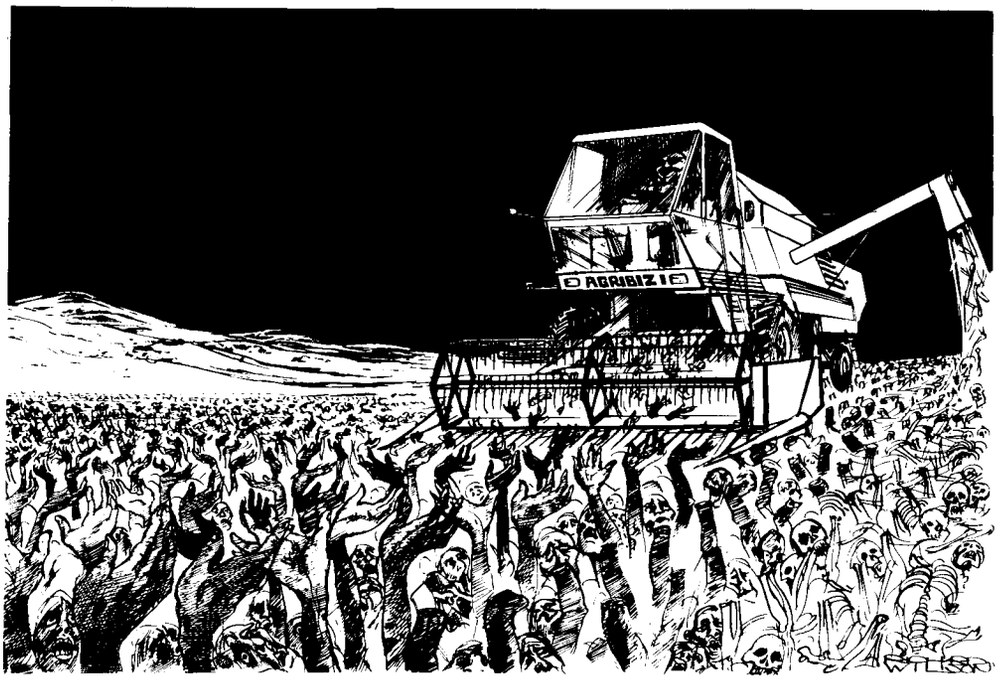
> regional food scarcities in the next few decades will precipitate a crisis greater than any the world has recorded in its collective memory. Before the crisis resolves itself, countless millions will perish. Yet there is no world food scarcity today nor will there be in the future . . . there is adequate food for all in every famine; the fault is gross maldistribution of food.

Development strategy in the Fifties and Sixties consisted largely of mimicking western models. It was assumed that a sophisticated modern society could be achieved by massive industrial investment programmes that need take no account of traditional rural structures. The result was a transfer of resources in labour and investment from the countryside to the city. Quite rapidly Third World countries increased their GNPs; Iran, for example, achieved an annual growth rate of 11 per cent. But the rural poor (and by far the majority of **people lived in the countryside) became very** much poorer. Rural unemployment led to migration to the towns at the rate of 12 million a year and urban unemployment grew in proportion. As Paul Harrison observes in his book *Third World Tomorrow:*

> Every Third World city is a dual city — an island of wealth surrounded by a black belt of misery. Outside the bright shining modern city of skyscrapers, flyovers and desirable residences, the poor are camped in squalor, disease and neglect, in shacks and hutments of plywood, cardboard, mud or straw, usually without clean water, sewers, health centres, schools, paved roads or paying jobs.

The urban poor are the rural poor transposed to the cities. And the skyscrapers are the regional headquarters of multinational companies keen to 'develop' their host's economy to the point where it provides a market for previously unwanted goods and services.

By the late Sixties these policies of growth had proved successful enough to satisfy a burgeoning urban middle class, but a much greater number of people faced absolute poverty; small farmers, peasants, landless labourers and migrant workers were immeasurably worse off. By the end of the Seventies nearly eight billion people were undernourished.



Two aspects of agricultural development contributed to both the wealth of middle classes and pauperisation of rural communities. The first was a legacy from colonial times — the turning over of mixed farming land to the cultivation of so called 'cash crops' such as sugar, coffee and rubber for export to western markets. Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins in *Food First* describe this system as one where 'the government is willing to sacrifice the nutritional well being of the local people in order to earn foreign exchange'. It is a dangerous policy; commodity prices fluctuate wildly, speculators win and lose fortunes, natural disasters and disease ruin harvests and the only sight of the precious 'foreign exchange' for many countries is an IMF loan or disaster relief aid.

The second major cause of increasing rural poverty was, paradoxically, intended to increase food production. In the grandly conceived 'green revolution' the most productive land was saturated with fertilisers, planted with new high yielding varieties of grain and rice and, where possible, agriculture became increasingly mechanised. The most thorough critique of the green revolution comes from Andrew Pearse, of the UN research institute for social development, in his book *Seeds of Plenty, Seeds of Want.* With a mass of detail which is sometimes eloquently presented and **sometimes ponderously specialised, Pearse** examines the failures of a once shiningly hopeful programme. The first and most important failure was the general assumption that scientific and technological advances could be implemented apolitically, without reference to the social needs of the rural poor. The new high yielding varieties (HYVs) required elaborate planting methods; the ability to read written instructions and cope with the government agricultural services was essential; fertiliser costs were high and credit was made available only to **the credit-worthy, in practice the larger land**owners. The whole programme was 'disproportionately time — and money — consuming for the small cultivator . . . whose livelihood is based on his own labour'.

As a result small farmers and peasants were left out of the agricultural investment programme altogether. Instead the funds went to the 'progressive' farmers. Pearse notes that **these were either rich landowners, or urban** élites 'for whom agricultural entrepreneurship became an attractive option as a sideline . . . and as a retirement occupation'. Farm business grew larger, and previously independent peasants and small cultivators became hired hands or migrated to the city. To cap it all the genetically uniform HYVs were found to be more prone to disease than the countless individual strains they replaced.

Pearse's book is important not only as a critique of a still current agricultural strategy but for its far-reaching analysis of the social implications of ill-conceived development. He convincingly demonstrates that 'economic growth or "development" by a capitalist penetration of the prime zones of production and incorporation in the international economy carry with **them a dynamic poverty-generating principle'.** The moral of this is forcibly stated:

> Rich and poor do not simply coexist. The entrepreneurial success of the rich is made possible by the hunger and importunity of the poor cultivator,

Food First by FRANCES MOORE LAPPE & JOSEPH COLLINS *Souvenir* £8.95

Seeds of Plenty, Seeds of Want by ANDREW PEARSE *Oxford* £7.50

The Geography of Famine by WILLIAM A. DANDO *Edward Arnold* £12.50

The Third World Tomorrow by PAUL HARRISON *Penguin* £2.50

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who is obliged to surrender his bargaining freedom and even pledge his labour at a reduced price in order to sustain his family and meet current obligations . . . Above all, the emergent rural middle strata are likely to continue to block redistributive legislation in favour of the land-poor and landless, whose economic improvement they perceive as a threat to their cheap and subjected labour force, their rents, their interest, and their petty monopolies.

William A. Dando is more conservative and plodding than Pearse, Harrison, Lappé and Collins. A professor of geography at North Dakota, he is wary of Marxist inspired development programmes. However, he neatly sums up an emerging consensus by quoting a Soviet economist: 'the capitalist system, by its mode of production . . . aims not at satisfying the people's needs but at securing the highest possible profits for the entrepreneurs'. Regrettably the collective system, through its lack of incentives, is pretty much a failure as well. Nothing new seems to have worked very well as far as the vast mass of the rural poor are concerned. Pearse attributes this entirely to a lack of political will brought about by vested interests. Paul Harrison agrees: 'the central obstacle to redistribution in non-socialist countries is political . . . if change is really to benefit the poor and powerless, it has to hurt the rich and powerful'. Harrison sets out a series of golden rules for reformist governments: redistribute land with all possible speed to create an irreversible shift in the balance of power; increase employment and effective family planning; avoid international debt and the IMF; eschew the import of western technology (though not technological skills); become self-sufficient in food; most important of all pay the military generously and be careful to treat both privates and generals with unflagging courtesy. It is hardly surprising that land reform is so difficult to achieve.

Tanzania is one country that has tried hard, and Harrison gives it credit for having 'pursued equality out of socialist convictions'. Unfortunately Nyerere's nationalisation of land has not proved an unqualified success. The model villages ('ujamaa') which pioneered communal farming methods are running into difficulties largely because the villagers do not have enough say in the decision-making process. According to Rene Dumont, a leading French agronomist:

> socialism was imposed from on high, from the president to the masses. The latter were not at all convinced it was necessary. The peasants prefer by far to work their own parcel of land rather than the common field . . . in Tanzania the real problem is peasant power.

China, the only country to have built a convincing agricultural revolution on peasant power, is frequently praised as the greatest success story in Third World development. It was made possible 'because the government that emerged was based on a politico-military alliance with the peasantry' (Pearse), and because an entire generation was drafted from the towns to work in the countryside in a policy which was to reach its logical conclusion in Kampuchea with Pol Pot. Now, as a result of the success of its agricultural sector, China is attempting to move rapidly into the technological age. Deng Xiaoping is discarding the policy of self-reliance in favour of imported high technology. As in Russia there is a new emphasis on personal rather than collective interests, and the emergence of a consumer class will encourage 'petty monopolies'.

Pearse and Harrison attach a good deal of significance to the role of the UN in educating and cajoling governments to help the rural poor. Neither of them, however, mentions that a new UN agency, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, was set up in 1977 with a budget of a billion dollars to finance integrated rural development specifically aimed at the landless and the poor peasants. Although the UN is usually associated with the impotence of the security council, its agencies, especially UNICEF, FAO, IFAD, UNDP and WHO provide the kind of moral impetus that governments so conspiciously lack.

The four books under review are all in sympathy with the aims of 'food first'. They reach much the same conclusions from only marginally different perspectives and their consensus is made the more poignant by the recorded lack of progress towards the common goal. Paul Harrison's *Third World Tomorrow* is particularly recommended. He has the authority and judgment of Pearse without the jargon, and the passion of Lappé and Collins without their rather shrill self-importance. He puts a good deal of faith in appropriate technology, agricultural extension, workers' education, land reform, and peasant co-operatives. It is sad, however, that his cautious optimism has to take so many knocks. In Peru for example, which he last visited in December 1976, the government is abandoning its land reform policies and encouraging investment from the private sector and multinational agribusinesses. Harrison dedicates *Third World Tomorrow* to his two children 'for a better tomorrow'. Hope remains, then, and there is a chance that it is not too late. □

Peter Buckman on the social and political impact of television

Media and messages

IT IS scarcely hot news to be told that television is not impartial. Although bound by character to preserve a 'balance' between conflicting opinions, the pictures from which most of us get our news — and which help to form our views — are chosen to reinforce our belief in the ruling ideology. Stuart Hood's book is an analysis of how this is done in capitalist countries. He has been a programme controller for the BBC, a maker of documentaries, a broadcaster, and an activist for socialism. He explains how shots are framed to give authority only to a select group of people — the monarch, weather forecasters, comedians, link-men, for example — who are allowed to look directly into the camera. Lesser mortals, or those whom television wishes to demean, are shot in profile, from different angles, from further away. That some of us find it more compelling to listen and look at someone whose face does not fill the screen is a point Hood doesn't mention.

His book is a series of densely argued generalities which many will find familiar. Audiences are encouraged to be tolerant of racism by such programmes as *It Ain't 'Alf 'Ot, Mum*, and to succumb to nostalgia for forgotten certainties in series set in Edwardian, and even more remote, times. Most programmes are middle-class because most programme-makers are middle-class. The pressure of deadlines, and the shortage of air-time, means that news editors favour the 'dramatic' over the meaningful, and trivialise most of what they touch. Satire such as *TW3* and the best 'Plays for Today' can be dismissed as sops to demonstrate the tolerance of the ruling élite. None of this can be denied. But Mr Hood is concerned to explain to young people and activists not only how television works, but how they can manipulate it as a preliminary to changing it. He is, however, very light on specifics.

Hood attaches little importance to the individual statement on television, such as those made in plays, films, documentaries, and series where the integrity of the programme-maker comes through; he has equally little faith in the ability of the viewer to 'read' what she or he sees in her or his own manner. For Mr Hood television will only change when the ruling ideology of television is changed.

Todd Gitlin is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Director of the Mass Communications Program at the University of California, Berkeley. He can't help his title, but by god it weighs down his prose. As a past president of the American Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), he presents an exhaustive analysis of how the mass media 'made and unmade' the New Left in the late Sixties and Seventies. His thesis is that the media patronised SDS until it posed a threat, whereupon reports on its activities were distorted, which made its members resolve to exploit the media to put across their message. But this resulted in an increase in membership which strained the organisation, made celebrities out of its leaders, and inflated rhetoric and militancy. This last allowed the media to 'elevate a moderate alternative', while 'contracting the movement's experience of time, and helping encapsulate it' (which, being interpreted, means fuelling their expectations and at the same time disappointing them).

Poor SDS! And yet is it fair to put all the blame for its failure on the media? Were the factions that split it apart purely the result of recruitment-through-publicity? Was the lack of a coherent alternative strategy due to the trivialisation of television? And how do we avoid being trivialised (which is Mr Gitlin's exhortation, as it is Mr Hood's), when they are at such pains to tell us it is unavoidable? The burden of the message of both these distinguished analysts is that a right-wing hegemony must be replaced by a left-wing one. But altering the ideology does not alter the apparatus, or its abuse. Which is little comfort to those artists — I use the term in its broadest sense — who see the medium as no more likely to change society than a novel or an heroic

On Television by STUART HOOD *Pluto* £2.95
The Whole World Is Watching by TODD GITLIN *California* £7.75
The Bounds of Freedom edited by Brian Lapping *Constable* £3.95 & £1.95
Community Media by HEINZ NIGG & GRAHAM WADE *Regenbogen, Zürich* £3.95

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ode, but who are prepared to use it to grab the attention of a large number of people in order to tell them something interesting.

It is something of a relief to turn to *The Bounds of Freedom*, which contains the scripts of six Granada TV programmes where top media people were asked to explain their approach to a hypothetical situation very close to real life. For example the editor of BBC News was asked what his reaction would be to a story in which a former Foreign Secretary was reputed to be involved in fraudulent financial deals, as well as sniffing cocaine at orgies. (The editor proves his fidelity to the ruling ideology by saying that he would consider most carefully the implications of a story about such an important figure; whereas a little later, when saying that he would publish a story about an anti-abortion spokeswoman who herself had an abortion at 17, he declares 'we might be forgetting . . . that people volunteer for public life . . . The act of doing that, I believe, makes a person vulnerable.')

THE reactions of those who may fairly be regarded as establishment figures — network controllers, newspaper editors, members of the IBA — certainly back up the conclusions put forward by Messrs Hood and Gitlin. But where this book is more valuable, and more readable, than theirs, is in that it presents the views of the people who actually run our media, not those who comment on them, and manages to deal with a wide range of specific, if hypothetical, situations. It is, for example, interesting to know how many people have to be consulted in the higher reaches of both BBC and IBA when an interview with a 'terrorist' is being mooted. I found it fascinating to learn from one Director of Programmes that 'stories for us, on the whole, are about bad news'; that Harold Wilson's Press Secretary 'never found that anything I attempted to do to influence the broadcasting authorities or programme makers had any effect whatsoever'; that 'subjective reporting' on a controversial subject will be left on the cutting-room floor; that if you go out to film with certain preconceptions of a story, what you come back with will fit those preconceptions. We suspected all that, perhaps, but it is instructive to hear it from the mouths of those responsible. What emerges from these scripts is a picture of top media men and women who are actually aware of the limitations of what they can achieve. And pictures, for them, do not make history: it is still left to people to do that.

Community Media is a sad footnote on the hopes for local people to communicate with one another through video, local television, film, and photography. A documentary report on six projects in London, Milton Keynes, and Birmingham, it shows how enthusiasm and ambition turn to disillusion and apathy under the influence of poor organisation, lack of support, and shortage of funds. Organising around single issues, such as bad housing, can be very successful in forming and informing a movement for change, but when the issue dies, so does the movement. Showing people to themselves through video and local television does not transform them into political beings. 'It's too easy to imagine that because people ought to enjoy an activity, they will jump at the opportunity'. But those who were interested enough to use the cameras found themselves acquiring a confidence in, and knowledge of, the medium which allowed them to question the pictures television placed before them. The mass participation fondly imagined by some commentators to be possible through the mass media is still a long way off. Nearly everyone has a television set, but the good news is that most of them (critics excepted) are aware that watching is a leisure activity, quite separate from real life. □

Eva Figes

Ladies of letters

The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney: Volume 8 edited by Peter Hughes with Joyce Hemlow, Althea Douglas & Patricia Hawkins *Oxford* £30

Maria Edgeworth in France and Switzerland edited by Christina Colvin *Oxford* £15

Elizabeth Gaskell: A Portrait in Letters by J.A.V. CHAPPLE & G.J. SHARPS *Manchester* £8.75

The Themes of Elizabeth Gaskell by ENID L. DUTHIE *Macmillan* £12

Although Jane Austen, master of artful feminine myopia, never mentioned the Napoleonic Wars directly, Fanny Burney, who saw more of life but not further, and who had a knack of finding herself at the centre of events, made up for this sin of omission. The latest volume in OUP's admirable edition of her journals and letters covers the few hectic months of 1815 known as the Hundred Days, and Burney, who had been living in France for over a decade as Madame d'Arblay, found herself in the thick of it, forced into a role of panic-stricken heroism for which she was unsuited by age and temperament. The d'Arblays were in Paris when news came of Napoleon's landing, and a reluctant General d'Arblay, over 60 and in poor health, rode off in a ridiculous helmet to defend his King, while Fanny played an elderly and tearful Andromache to his Hector. Recalling the event later, in her Waterloo Journal, Burney reached the heights of even her hyperbole. The general obviously knew his wife well enough not to say goodbye in his full military regalia, but Madame d'Arblay caught sight of him from a window:

> I sunk overpowered . . . I had not the most distant idea he was thus armed & encircled with Instruments of Death — Bayonets — Lances — Pistols — Guns — Sabres — Daggers — oh! gracious God! what horror assailed me at the sight!

Fanny Burney's style did not improve with age: the wit faded, and she became increasingly prone to sentimental verbosity, which the events of 1815 caused to flow as never before. She fled to Brussels with only two mourning gowns (for her father) and a change of linen, and panic about her trinkets and manuscripts was overtaken by a greater anxiety as the guns began to rumble on the nearby fields of Waterloo. When she is not worrying about her adored husband she is worrying about her son, not quite the model undergraduate at Cambridge.

It was a time when false rumours of victory and defeat followed in quick succession, but Fanny was in a better position to obtain accurate information than her husband, who was glumly processing Bonapartist deserters in Trier. In that city more than a thousand civilians died as a result of an epidemic spread by wounded soldiers, and d'Arblay begged his wife to stop nursing war wounded and leave Brussels. When real disaster struck Burney could still find true courage, and she stayed on. This volume is of undeniable historical interest in spite of the excruciating style and the editors are to be congratulated on the meticulous way they have filled in the complex background to these personal papers, which are sometimes less than explicit because of the fear of interception.

Maria Edgeworth had a lucid style that her contemporary conspicuously lacked, and as a tourist she observed France and the French with a refreshing clarity and detachment. Her generalisations have the ring of truth, because so many of them still hold good today. 'From what I have seen of the Parisians,' she wrote home in 1820, 'I am convinced that they require, if not a despot, at least an absolute monarch to reign over them.' This collection of letters covers two trips, to France in 1802 and France and Switzerland in 1820, and the only new material is a selection of the letters written home by members of her family who travelled with Maria. Those relating to the earlier trip are much the most interesting: Richard Lovell Edgeworth was predictably pompous, and Maria's half-sister Charlotte has a nice line in sarcasm. Describing a visit to Itard's wild boy of Aveyron she comments: 'Itard was not with his pupil the day that we saw the savage or else perhaps he would have explained his object in teaching this gentle and docile animal to *bow.*'

Maria herself is best at catching people: she saw Napoleon reviewing the troops in Paris and remarked on his 'pale woebegone countenance'; she did not like Benjamin Constant, nasal, near-sighted, and *'squinching* up his eyes so that you cannot see your way into his mind'; and her description of the visit to the ageing and embittered Madame de Genlis is truly memorable. It is high time some of Edgeworth's novels were back in print.

On the other hand, Elizabeth Gaskell is not a woman writer who needs to be rescued from neglect, and these books do her a disservice. I have a feeling that neither of them would have passed editorial muster if the subject had been a man, say Thackeray, and we certainly would not have been given a nauseating dust-jacket of pansies and roses. It seems to me both opportunist and sexist to issue books on women writers without regard to high standards of scholarship and real critical needs, simply because there is a growing market. *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Portrait in Letters* is extremely con-

Charles Tomlinson

The double rainbow

To Ulalume Gonzalez de Leon

When I opened your book
a rainbow shaft
looked into it
through the winter window:

a January light
searching the pane
paused there refracted
from white onto white:

so words become
brides of the weather
of the day in the room
and the day outside:

in the light of the mind
the meanings loom
to dance in their own
glimmering spectrum.

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fusing, being a collection of letters with linking narrative so that it also serves as a rough biography. But since the letters are arranged according to 'theme' and not chronology the result is a hopeless muddle. In any case Gaskell's letters, almost over-fluent and chatty, do not lend themselves to this treatment, as she was not in the habit of pontificating to her correspondents, and anything truly revealing has probably been suppressed, at her own wish. Most of her descendants obeyed her instructions and did not make material available for publication.

As for Duthie's critical book, it seems an even more counter-productive exercise. It is difficult enough to try to divide personal letters into themes like 'Marriage' and 'Travels', but to partition critical comments on her fiction into chapters headed 'Religion' and 'The Family' seems like unpicking a colourful tapestry in order to end up with a pile of different coloured wools. Gaskell is not a difficult novelist, nor a particularly complex one, and readers can go straight to her work without exegesis in hand. Many women writers are in need of critical reassessment at the present time, and perhaps it is still necessary to emphasise Gaskell's importance as a social realist to a public that only knows *Cranford,* but this kind of book is both pedestrian and old-fashioned. Like so many of its kind, the book obfuscates its subject instead of illuminating. □

FICTION

Nicholas Shrimpton

Situation ethics

Emmeline by JUDITH ROSSNER *Cape* £5.95
Bethany by ANITA MASON *Hamish Hamilton* £7.50
Castle In The Air by DONALD WESTLAKE *Hodder £6.25*

Plenty of authors write competent novels about the emotional lives of women. What makes the occasional voice stand out from this unceasing chorus is an instinct for the raw nerve. Judith Rossner touched one such sore spot in 1975 when she published *Looking For Mr Goodbar.* Her heroine, Theresa Dunn, was a cultured, middle-class New York girl who fancied tough working-class men and dared to indulge her tastes. She went out with a polite lawyer. But she conducted her sex life with rough and uneducated boys picked up in the local bars. Though the book cunningly skirted any form of explicitly feminist statement, its inherent defiance of a deep-rooted social taboo was sufficiently shocking to send it straight to the top of the American bestseller lists.

In *Emmeline,* her new novel, Judith Rossner prods at another area of forbidden experience. This is historical fiction, set in early 19th-century New England and apparently based on authentic anecdote. Its eponymous central character is a woman who fancies, sleeps with, and eventually marries her own son.

If you think this sounds like the Oedipus story told from the point of view of Mum then you're not far wrong and, as in the case of Jocasta, bad luck has a considerable part to play. Emmeline, at the beginning of the book, is a pretty 13-year-old sent away from her father's farm to earn some money in the cotton mills of Massachusetts. She lives in an unfriendly boarding house and her acute loneliness eventually leads to her seduction by a sympathetic overseer called Stephen Maguire. When she becomes pregnant her aunt arranges for the baby to be born and adopted without the knowledge of her parents and she returns to rural Maine for 20 years of uneventful spinsterhood.

Then, just as she is being courted by a wealthy local widower, a gang of young road-builders arrives to start work in the district. Emmeline finds herself strangely drawn to one of them. The fatal consequences of this attraction (which shock the son and his long-lost aunts and uncles far more than they shock Emmeline herself) provide the remainder of the plot.

Outlandish emotional circumstances of this kind are clearly what cause Judith Rossner's novels to sell. What lends her novels such artistic distinction as they possess is actually something rather different. The subject about which she writes best is characteristically offered as a mere prelude and is a topic which, rightly or wrongly, society finds far less shocking than either promiscuous sexual slumming or maternal incest. In both *Looking For Mr Goodbar* and *Emmeline* we are offered thoughtful, perceptive and moving accounts of the seduction of vulnerable adolescent girls by irresponsible older men.

Emmeline's seducer is a far more attractive figure than the egotistical Professor of Creative Writing who took advantage of Theresa Dunn. Maguire's attempts to resist the attractions of this improperly youthful girl are generously interpreted and the genuine pleasure which she derives from the relationship is compellingly conveyed. What is also made very clear is the unflattering fact that what she seeks from her sophisticated lover is essentially a substitute for her lost mother, a perception which lends an unexpected coherence to this necessarily divided plot. *Emmeline* is not a work of any very great weight or significance. But it is a thoroughly readable narrative, conducted with genuine style and pace.

Judith Rossner ends her book with a sudden move into philosophical paradox. 'Feelings so powerful that they could only have come from God,' she writes, 'lead some to those acts most strongly condemned by His word.' Anita Mason begins her first novel, *Bethany,* with a similar moment of generalised ethical enquiry. 'There was a time,' says her heroine Kay, 'when I believed that rights and wrongs were relative, that there was no ethic based on a truth beyond challenge.' This opening, unfortunately, promises a clarity of moral argument which the book fails to sustain.

The thoughtful Kay lives on a Cornish smallholding with her lesbian lover, Alex, and after seven years of solitary bliss suddenly finds herself obliged to share this home with a group of superannuated hippies. Simon, their leader, is a self-appointed guru who believes that he can save the world. When Alex has second thoughts and declines to submerge her individuality in his messianic community, Kay is obliged to choose between personal loyalty and the salvation of mankind.

The dilemma would be interesting if only one didn't feel so uncomfortable about the way in which *Bethany* presents the second of these alternatives. Simon is a figure as full of pious shit as an ecclesiastical septic tank, yet it is very hard to be sure that the author does not share the internal narrator's infatuation with him. 'Tall, lean, bronzed, and handsome,' he has only to open his mouth to convince everyone of their own 'moral and intellectual bankruptcy'. Since his astonishing intellectual powers consist chiefly of a willingness to fall back on the claim that 'The heart has its reasons, which reason does not understand' whenever he's caught out in a logical inconsistency, his main asset would seem to be his suntan. But in that case what are we to make of the narrator's abandonment, under his influence, of relativistic ethics? Anita Mason writes a lean and lively prose and has a strong sense of story. In *Bethany* her straining after extended significance prevents her deploying these attractive powers to the best effect.

Donald Westlake's *Castle In The Air* is not a book which permits itself even the briefest excursion into philosophical argument. It offers, none the less, a new and valuable insight into the laws of chance. If a hundred monkeys with typewriters were to strike the keys at random for a thousand years they would produce a novel as good as this roughly once every 25 minutes. A leaden caper story full of stereotyped comedy criminals, it commits the unforgiveable sin of losing faith in its own central conception. The castle of the title is being shipped to Paris, stone by stone, as an exhibit in an architectural exhibition, with the ill-gotten gains of a South American dictator concealed within its massy fabric. Yet when the lovable rogues come to steal it, it proves so light that 'Renee Chateaupierre, the most beautiful cat-burglar in Cannes' (see what I mean?) can shift it almost single-handed in a matter of minutes. Much is made of the linguistic difficulties of the criminals, who have the misfortune to be five different varieties of monoglot. One word in one language sums up the book in which they appear: rubbish. □

Vicki Feaver

Pre-natal

If you decide to go —
and we won't hinder you —
we'll make arrangements
for your journey.

You need take nothing:
those you're going to
will feed and care for you
as if you were their own.

You ask us:
what will it be like?
But how can we describe
a place so unlike this —

except perhaps by saying
that it's the opposite
and that, unhappy here,
you have imagined it.

But first, before you go,
we want to make quite clear
that once you're there
we cannot interfere.

Remember too that you are
part of us and just as we
shall never cease to feel
the pain of losing you

so you, though you will leave
behind all memory of us,
may yearn uncomprehendingly
for something you have lost.

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Gustaw Moszcz on the problems of Polish writers

Cliques and censors

THE POLISH working-class struggle of 1980 was against corruption, economic decline and cultural suffocation. The shattering of the regime's complacency seemed abrupt, but had been on its way ever since the riots in Radom in 1976 after which the dissident intellectual group KOR was started. It laid the foundation of Solidarity, and the Marxists in the group used the defeats of 1956, 1968, 1970 and 1976 to nurture affiliations between worker opposition and the intelligentsia, resulting in a genuinely socialist and pluralist movement.

The central delegate committee of Solidarity is composed of both workers and intellectuals. Failures of previous movements towards liberalisation within the Soviet bloc have been partly due to disjunctions between working-class aspirations and middle-class intellectual support. At present in Poland the intelligentsia is neither leading the movement nor reluctantly following it, but simply a part of it.

Films, cabaret shows, TV documentaries and official newspapers are now actively participating in an openness of debate previously unthinkable. No one is sure whether this signifies temporary loss of control over the media or a real mood of toleration by the government. During December, for example, TV viewers were treated to the spectacle of the Prime Minister being harangued by an irate member of the old unions and losing his temper in turn. People are joining massive queues to buy newspapers they once laughed at, and films that had previously rotted in the archives are nightly shown on television. Poland has, for the time being at least, become a culturally open society the like of which has not existed in Eastern Europe since the war.

Nobody is sanguine about the long-term survival of this state of affairs; it is a good time, nevertheless, to talk to some of Poland's intellectuals about the issues they think important and the reconstruction they hope for in Poland's cultural life. Three factors recurred in all our interviews: state finance of culture, the operation of censorship and how far the state should be allowed to impose its views on cultural life and production.

ANDRZEJ MENCWEL, Marxist party member, Warsaw university lecturer and on the editorial board of the literary weekly *Literature,* thinks that the operation of censorship in Poland has been 'complete madness'.

'The problem is that it never acted openly. There should be legislation concerning its functioning and the right to fight it in court. None of its rules were known by writers. Even the censors often didn't know why something was stopped. The only appeal you had was to the Central Committee, through connections, and this didn't often help.

'We experienced a cultural policy which pushed art into a mode of official propaganda, resulting in a depreciation of literature which cannot, in its nature, become propaganda. Only small circulation magazines escaped the notice of the censor, but they were in any case virtually underground because their editions were so small that they could never be found over the counter. The print-run of *Literature* is 90,000 — totally inadequate given a demand from two million intelligentsia. All types of cultural writing are snapped up instantly. Writers with a potential audience of 100,000 are printed in runs of 10,000, reflecting not only paper shortages but also official disfavour. Thirty thousand copies of an edition by me of an early 20th-century, quasi-Marxist literary theorist disappeared in one day. And yet there are many books always available which no one buys because they are simply propaganda.

'The state does need to finance culture but must begin to give society true control over distribution of funds through organisations sensitive to social demands. About 200 newspapers exist in the large factories around Poland voicing management attitudes and not those of the workers.

'For Marxists now the task is to adjust to plurality in culture and ideology. It was difficult being a Marxist intellectual since neither authorities nor society generally cared for it. The authorities identified state interests as their own personal ambitions, and to society at large being Marxist was understood as "loyalty".

'The present changes have major consequences not only for Poland. We only *may* be on the road to Polish socialism; I'm a restrained optimist since the inertia of the system is notorious . . .'

ARTHUR SANDAUER, a professor at Warsaw University and an elder statesman of Polish literary criticism, thinks that state financing has crippled Polish literature as much as censorship.

'Editors and publishers have to satisfy writers whom nobody reads . . . if their works are not published, authors go to the Central Committee, the literary guild or some connections elsewhere and complain. Three people are enough to create a clique and an artificial market here. The critic writes an appreciation for the publisher and the author benefits — the public doesn't enter consideration at all. Add to this the many eulogies of unimportant writers, and the nepotism, and the situation becomes mad.

'Take Iwaszkiewicz [leading literary figure in Poland till his death in 1979], who edited a journal publishing little but lengthy eulogies of his own work; or the current editor of *Poesia,* who publishes terrible, long articles by his own son. Such things can be done because there is such a scarcity of literary magazines that everything will be bought. Even the worst book will be bought for the 17,000 public and 300,000 school libraries if a letter from a "connection" goes to the Ministry of Culture. It's Alice in Wonderland. Literature can survive censorship but not this kind of assistance.

'During the early Fifties, when it was still a crime to propose a different aesthetic theory from Lenin's, my writing was proscribed . . . Now I am tolerated but hardly liked. Recently I received a letter from a writer who had had a state literary prize, suggesting that I write a favourable review of his latest book and recommend him for the highest state award. Refusing this doesn't make you liked. In Britain the effect of literary cliques may be mitigated by the market, but not here.'

JANUSZ ANDERMAN is co-editor of the unofficial literary journal *Puls.* He left official journalism in mid-1976 when the authorities made it impossible for him to continue.

'Commercial success doesn't really apply to books in Poland,' he says. 'The number in which an edition is published bears no relation to either the value of the text or the demand for it. Znak [a Catholic publisher] has just brought out Milosz's poems in 20,000 copies — two million would be sold. My second book was brought out in 10,000 copies, half that of the first, because it presented too sad a picture of Poland. Of 10 screenplays I've worked on, only one was permitted for use, and then half the film was cut.

POLITYKA, the leading socio-political journal, occupies the peculiar position of being an official party-supported paper which has, precisely for that reason, been given a scope to criticise unmatched by other journals. It's widely respected and, as with all genuinely interesting Polish magazines, the demand for it is such that it's nearly impossible to get hold of a copy.

Hanna Krall, a *Polityka* journalist who was the paper's Moscow correspondent from 1966 to 1969, remarks that her views were shaped by the events of 1956, when she broke from the party's youth movement under the impact of the uprisings that year. She was also profoundly influenced by what she saw during her work in Moscow.

'In journalism here of course compromises are necessary, a self-limiting of the choice of subjects. An example: during the Radom riots in 1976 the leading party/city official there, Janusz Prekopiak, waited upstairs in his office in the central admin building, continually phoning Warsaw for instructions and advice. He stayed there a whole day, expecting to be hanged by the crowds. I wrote of this, but it was stopped by the censor.

'It is possible, though, to handle stories concerning the life of ordinary people, giving not a complete picture, but not a falsified one either. The truth of this country lies with the downtrodden people, not with demoralised authorities. Under all the changes concerning what can be published one thing remains constant — it always depends on the personal sympathy/antipathy of various officials.

'My first book was passed by the censor even though it wasn't liked. Then just before printing, a Central Committee member phoned up the publisher and instructed that the typefaces for the book be melted down, which happened. My second book, based on research concerning a leader of the Warsaw uprising during the war, was printed and then twice removed from the printers. The theatre version I wrote was delayed with the remark "It's their affair not ours" ("their" meaning Jews). The editor of *Odra* begged various officials to permit its serialisation in his journals. They eventually agreed, but he lost his job . . . Little has changed. I write like before and they stop publication like before. During our present "moral renewal" I wrote a piece about Anna Walentynowicz, one of the Gdansk strike leaders, which was stopped. It was quite innocuous.

'Until 1976 all of us thought we were really decent just because we didn't actively co-operate with official power. It's rather shameful that, when the opposition started, many decent writers and artists hated them because their

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appearance made it clear that active and not just passive resistance was possible.'

MICHAEL RADGOWSKI has worked for *Polityka* since the paper started in 1957. He, too, feels that the record of journalists is not all it might have been. 'In Poland there is plenty of opportunity for the corruption of a journalist — the temptations of privileges, cheaper cars, etc. Journalists have been more obedient than other writers. On average I have about two pieces stopped a year. One came back with a note: "The problem has to be presented the other way around." This is the system which prefers average talents or laziness. Following the war, state support for culture was welcomed, but the idea became distorted along with the development of dictatorship. *Polityka* suffered most of all, with two articles stopped in every issue at one period.' □

Translation assistance by Daniel Gutowski
Next week: graphic artists in Poland

THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale

PM tension

Post Mortems by JILL HYEM *Soho Poly*
All the Trimmings by ROGER McGOUGH *Lyric Studio, Hammersmith*
Captain Stirrick by DAVID SCOTT and JEREMY JAMES TAYLOR *Young Vic*
The Roman Invasion of Ramsbottom by JEREMY JAMES TAYLOR and DAVID NIEIL *Young Vic*
Hiawatha by LONGFELLOW, adapted by MICHAEL BOGDANOV *Olivier*

Losing a husband can, and often does, mean losing your friends as well. At worst, it can suddenly and inexplicably categorise you as a sexual rival, a merry widow only too likely to be on the prowl for other women's men. Precisely this experience explains the extreme vindictiveness of the pinched and sunken protagonist of *Post Mortems,* balefully ensconced with her packing-cases and pills in a 12th-storey bedsit somewhere in the North London wilderness. Five months ago, her husband died, leaving her desolate and, it seems, resourceless. Now, belatedly, her chief coffee-morning crony from 'The Crescent' comes to call, only to find herself locked in and unpleasantly menaced. Gerda proposes to hurl herself off the balcony: Jan has been invited up to witness her suicide.

By the time this revelation comes Ms Hyem and her two actresses — Philippa Urquhart, with her curled lip and glittering eye, and Ruth Goring, plumply distraught — have proved themselves remarkably adept at creating and sustaining tension. It is a gripping little piece, and a thoughtful one too. After all, it would be a pity if the only conclusion to emerge from the situation was the obvious one, that we shouldn't make or be fair-weather friends. A more important point, as Ms Hyem evidently sees, is that women should avoid becoming so abjectly dependent on their men that the relationship ends by wholly and irretrievably defining them. Gerda, who wants to slough off all responsibility for her mental decline, is to be blamed as well as pitied; and Jan, who has clearly had her own married crises, and herself once unsuccessfully sought help from a preoccupied Gerda, is to be pitied as well as blamed. The play's stance is feminist, I suppose, but far from blatantly or crudely so. Indeed, Ms Hyem is undoctrinaire enough specifically to accuse the sisterhood of failing to give practical help to such as Gerda, and lets down herself, her characters and us only at the last moment, which produces the very reconciliation the play itself has proved impossible. Up to then, her writing has commanded nothing but respect.

Roger McGough sets his new revue in the seasonally-festooned corner of a suburban semi, making his decidedly unseasonal intentions apparent in an opening number that brings on a young husband in a flak jacket, exhausted after 'an 'ard day's terrorism'. He will spend Christmas Eve doing the family washing and waiting for Santa while his wife goes out to pursue an affair he's glad to hear is not platonic. If the sketch's mild scurrility is characteristic of the evening as a whole, so, it unluckily turns out, is its uncertainty of aim and lack of bite. Too much of the revue goes off at half-cock, when what we were all wanting, as McGough himself would certainly put it, were whole cocks.

There is one excellent parody, of a fairy-tale in which the king gives his daughter to the monster Rumpelforeskin, who has won her in a card-game, and one good sketch, in which a father instructs his son in the facts of porn — 'me and your mother, we can't help noticing you never ask your friends home for an orgy'. And the occasional verbal felicity illumines the encompassing murk, as when one of the four-person cast talks of a policewoman with 'teeth like zebra crossings on a wet Saturday afternoon'. But too often McGough contents himself with painlessly sending up platitude and cliché, whimsically punning, playing with words in rather the same way a child might play with an electric yo-yo, ingenuously exulting when a good yank makes it unexpectedly light up. 'This is a fine kettle of fish, he said, holding up a fine kettle of fish'. 'Could you pierce my ear?' — and a trumpet promptly does so. Cole's Law is chopped cabbage, carrots and onions, all mixed up; and so it goes on, inexorably redefining the McGough we all admire as just another McGuff, rogering the language to no great effect.

At the Young Vic there's something that calls itself the Children's Music Theatre, an outfit capable of assembling two separate companies of 30-odd for two separate shows. Pretty lively and accomplished the collective nippers prove, too, in the case of *Captain Stirrick,* a somewhat prolix and sprawling ballad-play about early 19th-century pickpockets, rather better than their material. They have some trouble getting their infant tongues round the lyrics of *Ramsbottom,* a comic musical about a Roman minister of transport who tries and fails to knock down a British pub with his *taurus soporens,* meaning bulldozer; but that is the more consistent, if less ambitious, theatrical success.

All reservations apart, Jeremy James Taylor, who founded the company, has clearly uncovered a seam well worth continued mining. His productions are the most original things around this vanishing yuletide, always excepting the revival of *Hiawatha,* which is simply terrific. For a moment, the Indians' voices sounded improbably genteel; but then I and all around me were sucked unprotestingly into the swirl, the music, the insistent rhythms, the unerringly adroit stage-effects. I don't think I've seen the Olivier exploited to finer effect. □

BALLET

Stephanie Jordan

Vim & vigour

Day Into Night, Polonia, Elite Syncopations, The Taming of the Shrew *Sadler's Wells*

New works by young company choreographers opened the winter season of Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet. David Bintley is no longer a freshman, having already created several works for SWRB and one, *Adieu,* for the Covent Garden company earlier this year. Less known is Michael Corder whose *Day into Night* is his second work after the pleasant *Rhyme nor Reason* of 1978.

Premiered in Norwich last March, with fussy costumes and allegorical content, Corder's latest offering now appears dressed in blue body tights and with less allegory. Apart from lighting, decor and some crescent-shaped poses in the central 'Night' movement reflecting the moon on the back-cloth, the theme of day and night is no longer relevant. The title of the music, *Sinfonietta la Jolla* by Martinu, might serve just as well for this essentially abstract dance. A musical title served Kenneth Macmillan in *Concerto,* a clear precursor of *Day into Night.* There are flaws: overcrowding with breathless activity, musical 'Mickey-Mousing' and predictable devices that just mark time, like the *corps* changing position, one pair after another down the line, not once, but several times. Yet there's no doubt that *Day Into Night* is an attractive, cute curtain-raiser, danced with flair and energy. Soloist Sherilyn Kennedy particularly distinguishes 'Day', the first movement, with opulent line.

David Bintley's *Polonia* has been created as companion to his short *Homage to Chopin* which appeared earlier this year. *Homage* is poetic, winsome, tasteful, a *ballet blanc,* reminiscent of *Les Sylphides* with its female group and central male figure played here by David Ashmole. *Polonia* is everything that *Homage* isn't, except for its use of music by Andrzej Panufnik. Dominated by a group of men who rush about heroically in an undignified and not particularly spectacular display of Polish-balletic virility, *Polonia* must be one of the most flashy, rumbustious works that this company has ever presented. Almost but not quite swamped by these male intrusions are two quiet sections, 'Village Madonnas', a gentle, pious female trio, and the finest part, 'Song of the Vistula'. This displays a lovely, lean coryphée, Jennifer Mills, in a fluid series of lifts that take her to the floor, letting her dip then rise higher and higher in the arms of Derek Purnell and Stephen Wicks. It is also the most economically and happily attired part of the ballet. The opening 'Anthem' shows off the men in ridiculous red and black flapping tailcoats, designed by Mike Becket, which are finally and hysterically unbuttoned and whirled in 'Kill the Bottle' when dance ideas have dried up completely.

Bintley's earliest work let loose a torrent of imagination (the piece created during the Gulbenkian National Choreographic Summer School in 1976 springs to mind) and an insistence on working from basics. It is disheartening to see how rapidly such energy and risk have been eroded. The institutional mould has all but engulfed Bintley and Corder likewise.

Macmillan's *Elite Syncopations* has been

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worked to death. It now receives an adequate but uneven performance from SWRB. Mostly it is either dull and pasty or played with so much grimacing that perception of the dance behind it all is rendered impossible. Let's give *Syncopations* a rest.

SWRB seems much more excited about its latest acquisition, *The Taming of the Shrew* by the late John Cranko. Before becoming director of the Stuttgart Ballet in 1961, Cranko choreographed for the Sadler's Wells/Royal Ballet and created, among other successful works, *Pineapple Poll,* an early example of him at his best, in comedy. That kinship and humour persist in *Taming of the Shrew.* Cranko's racy theatrical sense, masterly comic timing and handling of group action have all been exploited by the SWRB if anything with more relish and conviction than they were by the Covent Garden company when it performed *Shrew* in 1977.

Marion Tait, an impetuous but endearing Katherina, and Stephen Jefferies, the stormy but fond Petruccio, both look as if the parts have been made for them: all their scenes are full of zest and personality. Kate's sister Bianca and her favoured suitor Lucentio form a less interesting pair but Margaret Barbieri and David Ashmole dance them with deft prettiness. More sparkling are Stephen Wicks as Gremio, the hapless sneezing suitor to Bianca, and John Auld, the lugubrious, bespectacled Priest.

Unfortunately Cranko was less competent to make dance phrases than humour. Serious group sequences, some fortuitously hidden behind more tempting fun out front, rarely withstand close scrutiny: the principal *pas de deux* in Act 2, one for each couple, depict serenity and rapture with surprisingly ungrateful lifts and fussy holds. The score by Kurt-Heinz Stolze, loosely derived from Domenico Scarlatti, is trying and vulgar. Yet for unabashed knockabout comedy, *The Shrew* is a gem and SWRB is making the most of it. □

FILMS

John Coleman

Flying circus

The Stunt Man (X) *Classics, Haymarket, Oxford Street, Chelsea, Hendon*
Sitting Ducks (AA) *ICA; Paris Pullman*
Yilmaz Güney Retrospective *NFT, 13-30 January*

I had a dream. One day — and a very fine and special day it was — a 90-minute film was shown to the press and received excellent notices. People went to see the film in their millions and thoroughly enjoyed themselves; everyone connected with the operation made a handsome profit; there was no sequel to the film, nor did it ever appear in a revised version. The film was the film was the film. It just came out, like the sun, and the world basked in it. Neither before nor after its appearance did any article in the posh Sundays examine its genesis: the appalling difficulties of its birth, the five-year wait and the several suicides and recurring nosebleeds that occurred preceding its first screening. Its director was at no time, then or thereafter, to be seen on TV explaining — with the help of his analyst and copious references to Superman, Marx and Borges — the unhappily universal misunderstanding of his true intentions. For some reason, there was never a piece on the back page of the *Monthly Film Bulletin* enumerating the 57 cuts made by producers incapable of recognising a subtext were they to stub their webbed toes on it, and establishing — once and for all — the incomparable superiority of the eight-hour original.

Then I woke up. Richard Rush's *The Stunt Man,* in the event, is quite a jolly and enterprising comedy, with a few flashes of genuine wit and a delectable quantity of fun and excitement for the eye. Somewhere in California what shows signs of being the lousiest first world war epic ever is being directed by a megalomaniac, ageing, blue-eyed beauty, Eli Cross (Peter O'Toole), mostly scaringly airborne, a veritable *deus ex machina,* whether howling from a helicopter or strapped on to a mile-high killer crane. Into his mad circus stumbles sultry Steve Railsback, on the run from the cops and the unwitting drowner of a key stunt man; his enlistment as replacement is immediate; the interactions of baffled new boy, Eli and the epic's lovely star Nina (Barbara Hershey) supply a modicum of now sprightly, now sententious human interest. By and large, we experience the hair-raising procession of events through the recruit's eyes and ears; and *he* suspects a giant con game is being played on him, with his death the likely outcome.

This is all right, though it does allow Eli to perpetrate some heavy lines about Life and Identity. But it is in the *in*human interest that the movie best lives. O'Toole is hugely, hammily on song here, deeply shallow, that long mouth always set half open as if to beatify asthma. His Keystone Krauts pick up their dismembered limbs, split entrails, from the beach after a take to holidaymakers' applause; the rooftop and biplane stunts are tremendous (including a wingtip charleston); and there is an added 'in'-satisfaction to be had from comparing the pasteboard stuff we watch being shot to its relative 'realism' after technical tarting up: that old movie magic. Some first-rate character snippets come from such as Allen Goorwitz as Sam, the put-upon writer, and Chuck Barton as a stunt trainer. Machinery, effects and all, the most sustained and triumphant stunt, though, is surely that pulled by that maverick presence, Peter O'Toole.

The new ICA cinema, a 208-seater, makes a promising debut with Henry Jaglom's *Sitting Ducks,* another loose-limbed comedy. Jaglom's fey *A Safe Place,* his first feature, left me frankly cold, and his second, *Tracks,* a Viet-vet fantasy, coolish, but this third low-budget, independent venture has plenty of off-beat charm and an instinct for unexplained but acceptable freakishness. Its basic premise, as befits an editor on *Easy Rider* and an actor in *Drive, He Said,* is the great American highway, down which travel two balding nuts (Zack Norman and Michael Emil) in a Cadillac the tyres of which are stuffed with protection money purloined from the Mafia. En route to Miami, and from there to safety in Costa Rica, they pick up a studdish chauffeur concerned to write the Great American Song, a delectable lass whose fresh-faced candour belies a ritualistic devotion to sex with everyone, and a woefully mixed-up waitress. The two ladies (Patrice Towsend, Jaglom's wife, and Irene Forrest) are not what they seem, whatever *that* is in the first place, and yet a happy end's at hand. The essential gaiety of the sprawling trip relies with wisdom on a steadily maintained stream of dialogue, which meanders between panic and insouciance, taking in vainglory, honesty and nonsense on the way. Sex is talked about at length, and performed rather less, with a mind-ringing and very funny openness. The duo of Norman and Emil has been enthusiastically compared with just about every historic double-act from Laurel and Hardy to Derry and Toms. They *do* strike sparks from each other, but — undignified as the posture sounds — may I hold a lone, waiting brief? More in due course about the enterprising ICA, to open both a Cinematheque and a public-access video library in April.

Meanwhile, a season of 10 films from the currently imprisoned Turkish director-writer Yilmaz Gürney soon starts at the NFT. If his pictures are frequently rough to look at, there is nothing immature or unlicked about the brave talents behind them. My particular favourite is the 1978 *The Herd,* shot by his brilliant collaborator Zeki Ökten. This hard-won retrospective deserves support. At the Minema, the controversial Andrei Tarkovsky's *Mirror* returns. His latest, *Stalker,* the object of equal discomfiture in his native USSR, will be coming into the Academy very shortly. □

TELEVISION

Julian Barnes

Crazy crowd

Parky, David, Esther, Angela, Robert, Anna . . . It was wonderful news, wasn't it? Not, of course, that we will now be able to watch them even earlier in the day than hitherto, but that they have been signed up on *exclusive* contracts, which means there's no possibility, once breakfast television begins, of any breakout from the cornflake ghetto until those contracts expire. The idea of evenings in 1982 being Parkyless, Estherless, Angelaless, and so on, is more than the mind can take in for the moment. Not for nothing was that Peter Jay once dubbed 'the cleverest young man in England' (though it did, I think, have a question mark in the original). *Sir* Peter Jay, for services to television? No, rather, for services to altruism.

This wasn't the only heartening aspect to the New Year. TV drama got off to an excellent start, led by the Miller/Moshinsky *All's Well That Ends Well* (BBC-2). Seductively designed by David Myerscough-Jones in a sequence of daylit Vermeers and crepuscular Rembrandts (France had shifted northwards, it's true, but time and place were nearer than one normally gets), it was anchored by Angela Down's marvellously strong and intelligent Helena. Even in good Shakespearean acting, one often gets the impression that the actors have only just about understood their lines, thanks either to painful study or to some ultra-communicative director. Miss Down both startled and inspired confidence by conveying the impression that she was virtually the author of her own lines; so firmly in control that she could, if she felt like it, insert a soliloquy of her own composition and dare you to tell the difference.

It was a pity, then, that her counterpart Bertram (Ian Charleson) was so eccentrically cast: erratic in accent, let alone in apparent confidence about what his words meant. This blemish apart, it was a sterling production of a rarely-seen play, which made one wish the Shakespeare cycle had been abbreviated: a

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short season of The Bottom Ten, say, would have been far more exciting than this protracted, leggy, occasionally sparkful business. *All's Well,* by the way, for those who missed it, contains the first literary reference to the *New Statesman.* This occurs in Act Two, when the King of France is roaring his dissatisfaction at Bertram for his recalcitrance in taking Helena:

> Obey our will . . .
> Or I will throw thee from my care for ever
> Into the Staggers . . .

Not surprisingly, faced with the threat of an editorial job at Great Turnstile, the poor fellow runs away to Italy and joins the army.

Being Bertram's mother, the Countess of Roussillon, suited Celia Johnson's patrician manner rather better than being Lucy Smalley in Paul Scott's *Staying On* (Granada). One didn't quite see her as the ex-typist she was meant to be; while Trevor Howard has held such high rank in various cinematic armies that his downgrading to Tusker similarly jarred. What still remained, though, was a touching tragi-comedy of Anglo-Indian valediction, about a couple who stay on so long after Independence that they end up objects of historical curiosity to a long-promised (but never arriving) graduate student of Empire. The Smalleys bicker away their lives against a stunning backdrop of the Himalayas and a nearer backdrop of scheming but respectful locals. The texture (whatever Scott addicts may complain about) was quite dense enough for television, and Julian Mitchell's script artfully balanced the comedy and the pathos; one moment in church, when 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' suddenly modulated (disconcertingly for the Smalleys, comfortingly for the locals) into an Indian hymn, cleverly summarised the odd, untaking graft between two civilisations.

The History Man (BBC-2) began very well, though its first episode turned more on crackling light social comedy than on the nerveless dissection of liberal values which the book's reviewers, I seem to remember, were so keen on. Sharply rooted in 1972 (which made those Lichtenstein title graphics gratingly passé), it follows pushy Howard Kirk as he cuts a self-interested swathe through his sociology department, his students and his women. Anthony Sher seems ideally cast as this academic vicar of Bray: ingratiating himself with his students, preaching paper radicalism, trailing *mauvaise foi* behind him like a smell of drains. He's the sort of womaniser that all other men desperately hope will be turned down by every single woman, thus proving the inherent good taste of their sex; we are, needless to say, grimly and routinely disappointed.

The rival claims of moral conscience and social conscience (if that's where the adaptation is planning to focus) have so far been introduced only sketchily; but the first episode made for a bravura opening, establishing a large cast of credibly dislikeable characters, and was busy with excellent one-liners (my own favourite, above the much-quoted 'Howard, you have a problem — your wife understands you', was Henry's defeated moan of 'I'm not as unambitious as I'd like to be'). Only complaint: Steve Plytas, the sweating Mitteleuropean villain of so many serials of my youth, is now booked to play Mangel, the 'racist' geneticist. Give the guy a break.

No breaks at all, please, for the inhabitants of New York's Chelsea Hotel, guilelessly profiled in the first of a new series of *Arena* (BBC-2). The various artistically-inclined inmates of the hotel where Behan lived, Thomas died, and Burroughs wrote, paraded before the camera and preened themselves on their wonderful difference from other people: remember Angus Wilson's early story 'Crazy Crowd'? Quentin Crisp proclaimed from a balcony his predictable message about everyone working out their own lifestyle, sounding as he did so like a blue-rinsed Howard Kirk. The soft-voiced manager, hot for star names, boasted excitedly of a breast-feeding incident in the foyer. Bits of Warhol detritus drifted across the screen, and the Factory Man himself lunched William Burroughs in a private duel as to who could look the more ashen-faced. 'What I particularly like is the biscuits and the gravy' was the most telling observation overheard; which lingered even more limply in the mind when the twitteringly camp tour guide, one Arthur Marx III, tried summing up the hotel thus: 'You might equate it with Florence in the Renaissance.' What's the Italian for 'gravy'? □

Among this week's contributors:

PETER BUCKMAN is a former TV critic of the *Listener.* His latest play, *All Together Now,* recently ended a run at Greenwich.

EVA FIGES's new novel, *Waking,* will be published later this month.

Weekend competition

No 2650 **Set by Dan Kavanagh**

The Carrot Marketing Association has just launched a campaign aimed at raising the status of the carrot. It seems that unless the vegetable can go upmarket a bit it will be ousted by unscrupulous Dutch and French versions of the root. Suitable advertising songs and jingles, please. Max. 12 lines, by 23 January.

No 2647 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Extracts from Alice's Adventures in Thatcherland, Reaganland, Bothaland or Brezhnevland.

Report **By Len the Unlucky**

Crawl back after spending NY festively in bed with the festive flu. Overcome by sight of bulging sacks, sit down for an hour or so to recover. Suppose wanly to self that it's a good thing so many of you feel inspired to enter. Finally summon energy to open sacks and sample contents. Find that Thatcherland lends itself much the most readily to Alice-type lunacy. Wade through a lot of rather similar stuff, but standard is quite high and have to reject some goodies in choosing to award eight greenies for each entry printed below. Worn out by effort, have to lie down for a couple of hours. Meditating the while, decide that 1981 won't be all bad if you go on providing weekly tonics of similar wit and ingenuity.

'But what people can't seem to grasp,' cried the Blue Baronet, scrubbing ever more agitatedly at his iron-grey curls, 'is the sheer beautiful *logic* of the thing. Obviously, the best way to stop strikes is to put more and more people out of work, because if they're not working in the first place, they can't *stop* working, can they? You know,' he continued, with what Alice thought quite a maniacal glint in his eye, 'people say it's absolutely impossible to make *everyone* unemployed, but I'm not so sure. If anybody can do it, *I* can — and I'm going to have a jolly good shot at it, I can tell you!'

MARTIN FAGG

'Twas toryg and the thatchy flates
Did howe and keithjo in distrade;
All flumsy were the borrorates,
And the gen sec upbrade.

'Beware the Friedmanshock, my son!
The jobs that fade, the incomsnatch!
Beware the Munnet bird, and shun
The bishious Blunderthatch!'

'Twas miltig and the publy spens
were clut and clittered in the grabe:
All fusened were the cabitens,
And advaltax inflabe.

PETER ALEXANDER

'Yis, baas,' they all said, putting her in mind of the nursery rhyme. (They *were* black and woolly.) In the White Monkey's city, she heard much about Apartheid, which to her sounded like 'hate'. 'Isn't that a Bad Thing?' asked Alice. 'Thet dupinds,' replied the Monkey, from everywhere. 'How peculiarly you speak!' she ventured, politely. 'Puckewyerlee?' he enquired, peeling her last banana. 'Yes! You say "blecksnkeffirs" and don't in the least sound like the Red Queen.' 'Raid? Rid?! Queeeeen?! *Cummeesunverdomters*?' he replied, expanding alarmingly until he quite popped. At which Alice was blown away on the wind of change.

RICHARD LLEWELLYN

'The Irish Quadrille is a very difficult dance. Would you like to see it?' asked the Thatcher, and without waiting for Alice to answer she and the Haughey and the Humph and the Howe all joined hands and began. 'First we go round each other —' '— taking care not to tread on each other's toes,' said the Humph. 'Turn a few somersaults,' cried the Howe. 'Make an hysterical breakthrough!' yelled the Haughey. '— after dublin' back!' added the Thatcher. Then they all stopped and became very quiet. 'It looked rather complicated,' said Alice. 'Could you tell me what it was all about?'

JOYCE JOHNSON

'With extras?' asked the Blue Queen with a worried look. 'Indeed,' announced Alice, 'we learned Emigration and Subtraction.' 'And did you have paper?' said the Queen. 'Certainly not!' insisted Alice, 'we had a Decapitation allowance.' 'Ah! Then yours was an excellent school,' said the Blue Queen, 'except that you never read Milton.' 'But isn't Milton a cheese?' said Alice innocently. 'A very big cheese,' replied the Blue Queen, 'and very up-to-date about Money Terrorism.' 'But I thought Milton was blind,' remembered Alice. 'Nonsense, child!' screeched the Blue Queen. 'What on *earth* made you imagine *that*?'

BILL GREENWELL

'I don't suppose you've heard of Marx,' said the Guide. 'Of course I have,' said Alice, 'They've got branches everywhere.' The guide looked puzzled. 'Why are you called INTOURIST?' enquired Alice. 'Is it because when *tourists* come to Russia they get taken *in*?' 'Capitalist propaganda!' exclaimed the guide angrily. 'You mustn't believe all you read in your newspapers.' 'I don't,' said Alice. 'Do you?' 'No, indeed,' said the guide. A policeman appeared from nowhere. 'Deviationist — off with his head,' he shouted. The policeman vanished, taking the guide with him.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

'Which way do I go now, please ma'am?' asked Alice timidly. 'There are no alternatives when it comes to ways,' exclaimed the Blue Queen brusquely. 'There is only mine. You go right, right, right and then right again. Then some people will be all right, you see.' 'But won't you be back where you started from?' Alice began. 'You're not a Wet, are you?' roared the Blue Queen suspiciously. 'Now now,' replied Alice quickly, 'I dried myself really well. I fell into the Pool of Tears of the Unemployed, you see.' 'That's all nonsense, of course,' said the Queen. 'There's plenty of work . . .'

WAYNE SIDESADDLE

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Tony Miles

Chess

No 212 **An exciting finish**

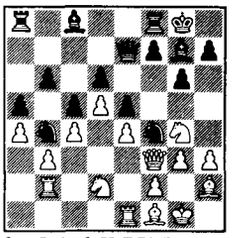
The 1980 Cutty Sark Grand Prix had a dramatic finish. With just the final event, Islington to play, John Nunn held a narrow lead over Murray Chandler, and those two were a considerable distance clear of the field. Unless Nunn scored 6/6 Chandler could overtake him with 5½. There was apparently only one other interested party — me. If I scored 5½ I would overhaul both. After three rounds all three of us had full points. In the fourth, though, I dropped out of contention by losing to Plaskett, whilst the other two both dropped draws. At this point only Plaskett and the young Midland player, Keith Arkell, had 4/4, the latter having beaten both the Scottish number one, Craig Pritchett and the Canadian IM Lawrence Day. Suddenly it became apparent that if Arkell were to win his last two games he would come from nowhere to take the Grand Prix.

In the fifth round he was a pawn ahead against Plaskett, but in the blitz finish he was unable to exploit it and only drew. Finally Chandler, struggling to win his last two games blundered away his queen to leave a relieved John Nunn better off by £2,000.

It was the end of a fine year for Nunn. He had shared first place at Hastings, and the British Championship, though probably his best result was in Baden recently where, though only finishing third, he exceeded the GM norm by a full point.

White: J. M. Nunn **Black: R. Vaganian**

1.P-K4, P-K3; 2.P-Q4,P-Q4; 3.N-Q2, P-QB4; 4.KN-B3, P-QR3; 5.KPxP, KPxP; 6.B-K2, PxP; 7.0-0, B-Q3; 8.R-K1, N-K2; 9.N-N3, 0-0; 10.QNxP, QN-B3; 11.B-K3, Q-B2; 12.P-KR3, B-Q2; 13.Q-Q2, N-N3; 14.NxN, PxN; 15.P-B4! P-QR4; 16.P-R3, B-K3; 17.P-B5, B-K2; 18.P-QN4, KR-N1; 19.B-Q4, B-B4; 20.B-B1, P-B3; 21.B-B3, B-K5; 22.N-K4, PxP; 23.PxP, N-K4; 24.RxR, RxR; 25.P-B3, B-N3; 26,P-B4, N-B5; 27.Q-K2, B-K5; 28.Q-N4! B-B1; 29.RxB. Resigns.



Problem 212

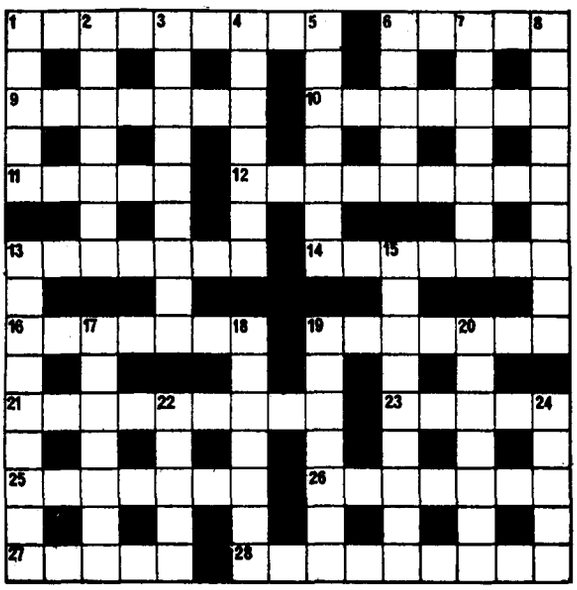
Black to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked no later than 21 January.

Solution to problem 210

K-B7! R-Q2ch; 2.KxR, P-Q8 = Qch; 3.K-B7! (but not K-B8, Q-N5ch!), Q-N6; 4.R-R4ch! QxR; 5.P-N7ch mates.

Weekend Crossword 1369

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1369, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 20 January.



ACROSS

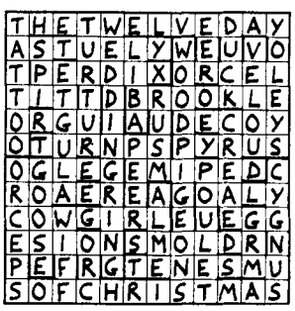
1 Signals we broadcast giving whereabouts of port (9)
6 The fellows look hot in academic gear (5)
9 A mix-up put right in the remote past (7)
10 A former player, he insists on payment (7)
11 Game point in Suffolk (5)
12 Gloomy week-end if the muses were to leave for the day (9)
13 Female in van is held under control (7)
14 Where life is mixed up in death (7)
16 Yarn for the vanquished (7)
19 Get information about the plant (7)
21 Dickens character appears obscure to a hundred viewers (9)
23 Suit as suitor's key part (5)
25 Be better than gold although not in the home (7)
26 Works at school and suffers after half-term (7)
27 Stay covered in something black (5)
28 For articles of clothing the cost varies with the college (9)

DOWN

1 Points round the stern and drifts gently (5)
2 The front in rain turning into a blissful state (7)
3 Ammunition needed when there is a strange shape in the cave (9)
4 A measure about employment made one excited (7)
5 Poet set for translation by television character (7)
6 Preside when I go in to do menial work (5)
7 The old star had a way of rising on the East (7)
8 Make a mistake going up in part to lay down arms (9)
13 Town frequently comes under the most vulgar (9)
15 Showy player in scene from past (9)
17 I appear in the list as a reveller (7)
18 Woman who discovers gold in charitable gifts (7)
19 Hot-headed speech for Shakespearean character (7)
20 They do not believe the female goes after sexual excitement (7)
22 Wood if decapitated would be like a skeleton (5)
24 Street radio turned up for sporting events (5)

SETSQUARE

Solutions to Christmas puzzles



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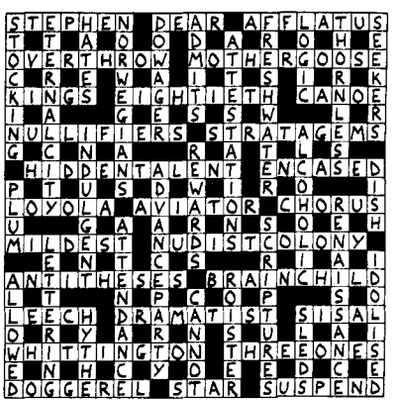

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NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252. Olivier (open stage): 'Hiawatha', 'Sisterly Feelings'; Lyttelton (proscenium stage): 'The Elephant Man', 'Watch on the Rhine'; Cottesloe (small auditorium): 'The Nativity'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

OLD VIC. 928 7616. cc 261 1821. 'S'. 9, 10 Jan. 8 p.m. 12, 13, 14, 15 Jan. 7.30 p.m. 'Trelawny of the Wells'. 9, 10 Jan. 1.30 p.m. & 4.30 p.m., 12, 13, 14, 15 Jan. 2.30 p.m. 'Toad of Toad Hall'.

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Cinema

SCREEN ON THE HILL 435 3366 (opp. Belsize Park Tube). Woody Allen's 'Stardust Memories' (AA). 3.20, 5.15, 7.10, 9.15. Ring 435 9787.

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EDWIN BROCK, SUE JACKSON, HENRY GRAHAM read their own poetry at Keats House, Keats Grove, NW3. Thursday 15 January 7.30 p.m. Tickets: £1.00 from Camden Box Office, 100 Euston Road, NW1 (387 6203) or Camden Libraries. Camden Winter Season Series.

Meetings

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PROF. RICHARD SCORER speaks on 'The Population Problem in Britain' 7 p.m. Tues. 13 Jan. Dr Michael Chance on 'The Ethical Implications of Biology Lost since Darwin' at 11 a.m. Sun. 18 Jan. Steven Lukes on 'Can A Marxist Believe in Human *Rights?*' at 11 a.m. Sun. 25 Jan. SPES, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Full programme on request.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE: Sunday lectures on religion and philosophy. Enquiries 06285 26464.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme. Sun. 11 Jan. 8 p.m. Open Q/A Meeting 'The Mystery of Man'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. **LUNCH-HOUR LECTURES.** 1.20 to 2. Botany Theatre. 13 Jan. 'The First Account in England of the Hasidic Movement' by Professor C. Abramsky; 15 Jan. 'Architecture and Public Housing in Post-War Britain' by Mr M. A. Forty. Admission Free. Details of Public Lectures from Publications Office (send stamped envelope).

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: DISARMAMENT, DEVELOPMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS, ETC? Sir Anthony Parsons, UK Ambassador to UN, speaks UNA Mon. 12 Jan., Westerminster Cathedral Conf. Centre, Victoria St, SW1, 7 p.m. All welcome.

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Mons 19, 26 Jan., 2, 9 Feb. at 5.30, Lord Northcliffe Lectures in Literature by Mr Gabriel Josipovici, '***Writing and the Body***'.

Fri 23 Jan. at 5.30, Commonwealth Fund Lecture in American History by Professor Allen Weinstein, '***Beyond McCarthyism: American Society and the Internal Security Issue, 1917-1960***'.

Complete list of public lectures from **Publications Office, University College London, Gower St, WC1E 6BT.** (Stamped envelope required.)

Conferences

CONFERENCE – 'Can Local Government Survive?'. 17 January, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Memorial Hall, Barker's Pool, Sheffield. Speakers: David Blunkett, Leader of Sheffield Council, and Bob Litherland, MP. Fee £1. Book through the Labour Coordinating Committee, 9 Poland Street, London W1, or pay at the door.

LITERATURE TEACHING Politics Conference Literary Studies: The Practice of Teaching, New Hall, Cambridge 3-5 April, 1981. Details from: H. Glen, New Hall, Cambridge.

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RUSSIA & EASTERN EUROPE. Books bought and catalogues issued. A. C. Hall, 30 Staines Rd, Twickenham, Middlesex.

SECONDHAND BOOKS for sale (Russia, economic History, trade unions & politics). List No. 4 from Nick Spurrier, 79 Whitstable Rd, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 8EA. Tel. 62764.

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